

[Luke 10:38-42](#)

Have a "Mary" Christmas

We're all guilty of it, especially during the holidays. We can get so busy, so distracted and so anxious. Why? Well, there's the need for gift-buying, food preparation, house decorating, and visiting friends and family. There's so much to do in such a short time. And if we're trying to do all of those things ourselves, we can easily become irritated with those around us, especially those who aren't helping.

And because of our irritation, anxiety and troubled spirit, Christmas may not turn out to be the most wonderful time of the year after all. Before we know it, we've put so much time and effort into making the season bright, that we've lost sight of Christmas' true meaning, which is worshiping and honoring Jesus.

So, the aim of this Christmas Eve message is to encourage us to choose the good portion. Let's sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to Him. Take a step back from the busyness of the holiday season. Yes, let's step back amidst all of the time and effort involved in purchasing gifts, preparing food and visiting family. Let's worship and celebrate Jesus.

So, in this account from [Luke 10:38-42](#), we have the sisters Mary and Martha. By the way, their brother Lazarus was the man that Jesus raised from the dead ([John 11](#)). Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His teaching. In the Greek, the phrase "listened to His teaching" means continually listening. In fact, Mary was at Jesus' feet a lot according to Scripture. For example, [John 11:32](#) and [John 12:3](#) states the following:

Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

[John 11:32](#) (ESV)

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. [John 12:3](#) (ESV)

According to the text ([Luke 10:38-42](#)), here was Mary once again sitting at Jesus' feet. Amidst all of the guests and the need for serving, she chose to do the one thing that was necessary. Mary chose the good portion, Jesus Himself. She put everything else aside to spend time worshiping and honoring Jesus. Nothing could be more important than Him.

Lisa Chan, wife of well-known author and pastor, Francis Chan, says this: "As the world careens on in all its frenetic madness, and many demands insist on our attention, we can become people who *choose* to be still, sit at the Lord's feet, and listen to His voice. For it's in His Word that we will receive the good portion we need most."

But wait a minute. What about Martha? Wasn't her serving the Lord and the guests who had gathered important? Of course it was. However, Martha became so distracted with "taking care

of business" that she was irritated with Mary not helping her. You can just see it now - Mary sitting at Jesus' feet and Martha pointing at her sister and saying in an exasperated tone of voice - "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ([Luke 10:40](#)) However, Jesus' answer may surprise us. Here's [Luke 10:41-42](#).

⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, “**Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,**
⁴² **but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.**”
[Luke 10:41-42](#) (ESV)

In this situation, it appeared that Mary was in the wrong and Martha was in the right. However, Jesus' gentle rebuke to Martha set things straight. In His love for both sisters ([John 11:5](#)), Jesus pointed out an important difference that existed between the two ladies on this occasion.

The difference was that Mary chose to spend time with Jesus in order to honor Him and treasure His presence. Martha, on the other hand, was distracted by serving and missed the blessing of Jesus' presence. She put her serving others, certainly needed and right, above communion with her Lord. Her remarks about Mary's not helping certainly showed her pride and frustration.

Which of the sisters can you relate to, Martha or Mary? For me, it's Martha. I get so uptight when there's a lot to do, especially in ministry. Coordinating men's ministry, leading a small group, serving as an elder, and conducting a weekly Bible study at the local nursing home gets busy, relatively speaking, for an old retired man like me. I can't see the forest for the trees. The Lord's presence is right there, but the distraction associated with serving Him in multiple ways obscures His sweet presence. Serving becomes more important than the One being served.

Yes, I'm a Martha – frantic and fretting as I serve the Lord instead of just sitting silent and satisfied at His feet. So, what's so important about sitting at Jesus' feet and worshipping Him? To paraphrase what one of the elders said at our recent elder council retreat, "To worship Jesus and revel in His presence is like seeing the Grand Canyon. You never stop being amazed; it's too good, too awe-inspiring not to stop and take it all in."

The splendor and majesty of the Grand Canyon pales in comparison to who Jesus is. In fact, there is nothing or no one like Him. That's because He's the intersection of steadfast love and faithfulness ([Psalm 85:10](#)). Jesus is the Way, Truth and the Life ([John 14:6](#)). He's the humble King who came to serve and not to be served ([Mark 10:45](#)). He's the essence of trustworthiness and righteousness. He's gentle and lowly in heart, offering rest to the weary and heavy laden ([Matthew 11:28](#)). Jesus is the only Person who perfectly epitomizes true peace, hope and joy.

Indeed, Jesus is our only hope, peace and joy. He came to save people like you and me from our sins. He willingly followed God's plan to be the perfect sacrifice, thereby bringing reconciliation between God and man. His blood shed on the cross is the only way for forgiveness of sins. He is the inexpressibly greatest gift of all. His love is so great that He laid down His life so that others might live.

During World War II, Army Lieutenant John Robert Fox was an artillery spotter. Fox's job required him to radio coordinates of locations where artillery units would direct their fire. On December 26, 1944 in a fierce battle with German forces, Fox radioed for his own location to be fired upon so that American troops would have time to retreat. John Fox died, but his sacrifice allowed other soldiers to live.

One man died for the sake of others. He willingly did so. The same is true with the death of Christ. He willingly gave His life so that people like you and me could live abundantly and eternally. Have you trusted Christ Jesus through faith alone by God's grace alone that His death and resurrection gives life? If not, now is the time to receive Him; now is the time to believe in His name; now is the time to come and adore Him.

Truly, the Lord Jesus Christ is awe-inspiring; He is worthy of every praise we could ever say, do or think. He is without equal. He is God. He is Immanuel – God with us. Yes, God with us in our messy lives in this messy world. Indeed, oh come let us adore Him! Let us fall down at His feet, worship Him, honor Him, and listen to Him. That's what Mary did.

Think about this: Martha served her Savior, Mary savored Him; Martha complained to Him, Mary was content with Him; Martha was exasperated with Mary, Mary was enthralled with Jesus; Martha did a nice thing, Mary did the necessary thing. Mary chose the good portion, the necessary thing - Jesus. On the other hand, Martha thought that doing something *for* Jesus was more important than doing something *with* Jesus.

How about you and me? In spite of the busyness and anxiety the holiday season can bring, has shopping, baking, gift-wrapping, visiting, and traveling captivated our hearts? What would it look like for us to be still and sit at Jesus' feet, enthralled with Him, worshiping and exalting Him? Here's [Psalm 46:10](#).

Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

[Psalms 46:10](#) (ESV)

One final thought: What kind of Christmas are you and I going to have this year? My hope is that we'll choose the good portion and have a "Mary" Christmas, which is spelled M-A-R-Y. God bless you all in this Christmas season. May you find the Lord Jesus to be your joy, light and salvation above all other things. Amen.