

WHAT JESUS SAW IN MARTHA

TEXT: LUKE 10:38-42 NIV

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one.[a] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

INTRODUCTION

Some years ago, The Archbishop of Canterbury was rushing to catch a train in London. In his haste, he accidentally jumped on the wrong passenger car and found himself on a car full of inmates from a mental hospital. They were all dressed in mental hospital clothing.

Just as the train pulled out of the station, an orderly came in and began to count the inmates, "1-2-3-4..." when suddenly he saw this distinguished looking gentleman there wearing a business suit and a clerical collar and he said:

"Who are you?" The answer came back: "I am the Archbishop of Canterbury!" And the orderly said: "5-6-7-8."

The point of that story is this: It is so important to know who we are and who other people are. If we know what makes us tick and what makes other people tick, we get along better. If we understand where we are coming from and where other people are coming from, we relate better. There is more compassion, more empathy and more kindness. When Jesus looked at Martha that day in that emotional scene, he saw some red flags, some warning signals, some danger signs, some destructive attitudes within her which were more harmful to Martha herself than to anyone else. Jesus loved Martha. They were good friends and that day, he saw in her some hurtful attitudes that were working in her like spiritual poisons, petty attitudes, which can devastate and destroy the soul.

Let's look at these dangerous **attitudes** which were in Martha. We may find ourselves or someone we know somewhere between the lines. When Jesus looked at Martha that day...

I. HE SAW THE DANGEROUS ATTITUDE OF RESENTMENT.

A. Resentment is easy when one does not have the right attitude.

Martha resented *what she was doing for Jesus* because Mary was not helping her. What does that say about her motive in serving?

B. The only payoff for resenting something or someone is bitterness.

We might say Martha chose the way she felt when she chose her attitude.

A concentration camp survivor named Viktor Frankl wrote, “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: To choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's way. *Philippians 2:12-18.*

II. HE SAW THE DANGEROUS ATTITUDE OF NARROWNESS-MINDEDNESS.

A. Narrow-mindedness is all about one's perspective or viewpoint.

All Martha could see was that Mary wasn't helping her. It never occurred to her something else might be more important or needed. *Often, what is really important occur to us until later—or too late.*

Illustration: Will the Grass Ever Come Back?

Erma Bombeck, the author who wrote *"If Life Is A Bowl Of Cherries, What Am I Doing Here In The Pits"*, tells of two moments in her husband's life:

There was a time when the children were growing up that her husband used to go and look at the back yard. Surveying the muddy patches where the lawn should be, he would wonder -- Will the grass ever come back?

And then there was the time when the children were grown and gone that her husband went and looked over the beautiful green lawn, immaculate from lack of use and wondered -- Will the children ever come back?

Some parts of life are temporary - some are eternal. Wisdom knows the difference. This is the fundamental issue at stake in the story of Mary and Martha. -- Richard J. Fairchild, *The Better Part*

B. Narrow-mindedness automatically limits what can be seen.

How are we being limited by our perspective?

III. HE SAW THE DANGEROUS ATTITUDE OF UNKINDNESS.

A. What caused Martha to be unkind?

Martha became unkind when Martha made the situation about her.

B. When someone is unkind, he or she is hostile.

An unkind attitude feels justified in being unsympathetic and harsh.

CONCLUSION

Steve Goodier is quoted in *Reader's Digest* with making the following observation, "Both the hummingbird and the vulture fly over our nation's deserts. All vultures see is rotting meat, because that is what they look for. They thrive on that diet. But hummingbirds ignore the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, they look for the colorful blossoms of desert plants. The vultures live on what was. They live on the past. They fill themselves with what is dead and gone. But hummingbirds live on what is. They seek new life. They fill themselves with freshness and life. Each bird finds what it is looking for. We all do. —Steve Goodier, *Quote Magazine*, in *Reader's Digest*, May, 1990.

Note: Sermon idea and three main points drawn from *Sermon.com* Sub points added.