

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Stories@storiesoftheMaster.com

~ **Calamities in the Kitchen** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Luke 10:38-42.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story.

New American Standard Bible (NASB) Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
New Living Translation (NLT) Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation.

Luke 10:38-42 NASB	Luke 10:38-42 NLT
<p>³⁸ Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. 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 <i>only</i> one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."</p>	<p>³⁸ As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."</p> <p>⁴¹ But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."</p>

2. Discover key cultural and historical insights

The following insights are from Social Science Commentary of the Synoptic Gospels by Malina and Rohrbaugh.

- Designating Martha's house as "her home" was an exception. Normally, the house would be designated by the man's name, in this case, Lazarus although he is not mentioned in the story. Also, the man, not the woman would always welcome people into the home.
- A woman's honor and reputation depended upon her ability to manage a household.
- Martha's complaint against Mary would be considered a legitimate complaint as Mary was not fulfilling her responsibility and by sitting at Jesus' feet, she was breaking a barrier between men and women.
- Men and women were divided by their roles, by space, and by expectation. The household was the domain of women with boundaries that could not be crossed and that demanded adherence by everyone in the family.

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Stories@storiesoftheMaster.com

- The household was a social and economic unit and women were responsible for tasks such as child rearing, clothing, and food distribution.
- Women would have little to no contact with males outside their family.
- Because of this isolation, women relied heavily upon companionship with other women.
- Although “gossip” has a negative connotation, it was also an important means of communication among women.

The following insights are from Alfred Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life

- In Jerusalem, no man was to count his house as his own. In Jerusalem, they would hang curtains at the front door to show that room was still available.
- During the feasts when the population would swell, there was room for all. And the hospitality was especially seen in Bethphage and Bethany.
- A rabbinic saying – “Let your house be wide open, and let the poor be the children of your house.”
- Some said there should be four doors to every house to welcome guests from every direction.
- The rabbis said that hospitality involved as great a merit as attendance at an academy of learning in Jerusalem and that to entertain a wise man and to send him away with presents was as meritorious as the daily sacrifices in the temple.
- The receiving and entertainment of strangers is as great receiving the glory of God.
- Psalm 109:31 – “He shall stand at the right hand of the poor.” One rabbi said, “Whenever a poor man stands at your door, the Holy One, blessed be his name, stands at his right hand. You give him alms, know that you shall receive a reward from him who stands at his right hand.
- We are told to imitate God who clothed the naked (for he clothed Adam and Eve), who visited the sick (for he visited Abraham in the heat of the day), who comforted the mourners (for he blessed Isaac after his father Abraham’s death), and who buried the dead (for he buried Moses.)
- A host is to look pleased when entertaining his guests, to wait upon them himself, to promise them little but to give them much and a guest was expected to say, “At what trouble my host has gone, and all for my sake.”

The following insights from NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible

- The opportunity to show hospitality to a famous teacher was an honor.
- The house of Martha and Mary had to have been a large one in order to host Jesus and his disciples. In such a situation, disciples would sit or recline.
- Mary was sitting at Jesus’ feet, thus taking the position of a disciple. Women learned the Torah in the synagogue or from lectures in family settings, but they were never formally trained in the academies.

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Stories@storiesoftheMaster.com

Answer these reflective questions.

Read Luke 10:38-42. Why do you think Martha let so many things distract her? Do you believe this was part of her personality? What distractions keep you from the Lord?

Martha asked the Lord if he cared that the burdens of preparing the meal were falling upon her. Have you ever doubted God's care for you? If so, explain the situation and what happened. Did you let God know how you felt?

Jesus said that Martha was worried and bothered about so many things. How is your emotional health right now? Are you worried and bothered by things? If so, list them and pray through each one and give them to the Lord.

How can you develop the habit of Mary and focus on the most important things in life?
