

## **“Martha and Mary”**

Luke 10:38-42

### **(Introduction)**

It is often said that there are two types of personalities: extroverts and introverts. In today's Gospel of Luke, chapter 10, there are two sisters, Martha and Mary. They are probably the older sister, Martha, who is extroverted and the younger sister, Mary, who seems to be introverted (although the Bible is not clear which is the older sister and which the younger sister). Which type do you think you are?

Six questions: do you find socializing draining (introverts) or invigorating (extroverts)? Do you prefer to interact in large groups (extrovert) or small groups (introvert)? When solving problems, do you prefer to exchange ideas with others (extroverts) or come up with answers alone (introverts)? Do you prefer "social time" (extrovert) over "alone time" (introvert)? Would you describe yourself as the "center of the party" (extrovert) or as a quiet listener who draws inward rather than outward (introvert)? When you walk into a room full of strangers, do you introduce yourself (extrovert)? Or do you avoid introductions as much as possible and wait for people to come to you (introvert)?

Of course, both the active extrovert type and the deliberate introvert type are needed. Both types will have strengths and weaknesses, and it is best to be in harmony with each other, giving priority to what is more important than just humility.

However, the story of Martha and Mary that we will be looking at today is not simply a clash between extroverted personalities and introverted types. As you have all experienced, clashes and conflicts can arise between extroverted and introverted people. But there is a deeper spiritual truth being taught here that goes beyond a person's personality.

### **Luke 10:38-42**

First and foremost from today's Scriptures, let us consider the need to welcome Jesus into all of our lives, our homes, our workplaces, and our relationships. Martha and Mary both welcomed and entertained Jesus. Second, let us address the importance of doing the Word of God, focusing on Martha. Not only hearing the Word, but doing it is recommended many times in the Bible.

But third, I would like to address the overriding importance of hearing the Gospel message. For if we too only do without hearing the Word of Jesus, we will surely fail. In other words, we need to (1) accept Jesus, (2) do the Word, and (3) always hear the gospel and be transformed.

## 1. Welcoming Jesus

According to Luke 10:38-39, a woman named Martha welcomed Jesus into her home. Her sister Mary would have been with her, and the two of them would have worked together to receive Jesus and the disciples into their home. In other words, they accepted Jesus' message, believed in him as the Messiah, and became his disciples.

If we look at the first half of Luke 10, we see there that 72 disciples were sent to various towns and villages to deliver the message of Jesus. Those who receive the disciples are called "children of peace," and they entertain the disciples as they welcome them. They let the disciples stay in their homes and provide them with food.

Perhaps Martha and Mary became "children of peace" who welcomed Jesus and his company. The presence of Jesus allows the shalom (peace) of the gospel to fill their families. Not only will the family be blessed, but they will participate in the work of the Kingdom of God. They will evangelize together. They will witness healing and salvation through Jesus. Their home, so to speak, becomes a mission center of the Gospel.

A similar thing happened to Paul and his group. It happened when they went to Philippi, the first mission field in Europe. A woman merchant named Lydia accepted Paul's gospel message and became a Christian. She then welcomed Paul and his missionary team into her home.

### **Acts 16:14,15**

"One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us."

What I want to draw your attention to here is that Jesus is referred to as "Lord" several times, and in verse 39, "Mary...was sitting at the Lord's feet, listening to His words." Martha, of course, also calls Jesus "Lord. This means that Jesus became the master, the head, the guide, and the fulfillment of their home, their family, their daily life, their work, and their relationships.

Especially to specifically welcome Jesus into your home and make Him Lord, in an intimacy that is like family, open in all things, and unable to be hidden. Who of you are thinking, "Well, that's a little scary..."? Of course everything will be known.

It is the family that shares all the good and the bad, the lies and the falsehoods, the mistakes and the sins, the joys and the pleasures. There are marital quarrels among family members, and feuds between parents and children. They get angry, lash out, get depressed, leave, rant, and rave.... It is in the midst of these realities that we welcome Jesus. Yes, we need Jesus to bring us peace. We need Jesus to bring peace.

In fact, clashes, quarrels, and feuds broke out between the sisters in Martha and Mary's home. The momentum of the conflict spilled over to Jesus, and even he was criticized. But Jesus is calm and kind. He was loving toward Martha and toward Mary, and he stayed in the house of quarrels (although we do not know how long he stayed there) in order to bring true peace. This is to bring true peace.

I ask you all. Do you need to welcome Jesus into your home, into your life, into your daily routine? If you are single, it is easy to feel alone and lonely. It is when you go home that you feel lonely and uncertain about your future. You will be exhausted and depressed by difficult problems at work or conflicts in your relationships, and you will shed tears in the midst of unmanageable conflicts.

Please welcome Jesus, who is full of grace and truth, into your home and into your life. Then peace will come into your conflicted relationships. Peace will begin to dwell in your heart. Don't you want to be a child of peace? Not only will you be at peace, but peace will begin to spread from you.

## **2. Doing the Word**

In this biblical episode, by the way, as you know, there was a clash between sisters in the household that welcomed Jesus into their home. Especially Martha is frustrated and angry with Mary. Moreover, the conflict is directed at Jesus, who is both Lord and guest. How rude! She must have been very irritated.

Mary, on the other hand, sat at Jesus' feet and listened to him with a cool face. Jesus then chides Martha for her frustration and commends Mary's attitude. He tells Martha that Mary has chosen the better way and that Martha too needs this attitude.

From this point on, the sisters' story can be interpreted as contrasting action with listening, so to speak, and as endorsing a contemplative life. It is easy to think that listening, contemplation, and meditation are superior to active living, vigorous movement, and action. In other words, to put it plainly, the idea is that communion with God and contemplative prayer are more important than action and activity.

However, this short section must be interpreted in the context of the entire Gospel of Luke chapter 10. For this section is not simply a battle story of Martha vs. Mary. Also, it is not a simple teaching of deeds vs. hearing, action vs. meditation. We cannot simply say that listening is more important.

This is because the episode in the immediately preceding paragraph revealed the importance of doing God's Word. The law expert knew the Word of God, which teaches us to love, but he did not love his neighbor faithfully. They heard and knew, but they did not do it. In other words, the importance of doing the Word was emphasized. Even the priests and Levites knew, but did not practice.

Take a careful look at verses 40-41. The antidote to simplification and preconceived notions is a close look at the Bible.

"But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things.'"

What is the problem? It is not the act of Martha's hospitality. It is her "restless heart" and irritability. It is that she is criticizing Mary and even taking her anger out on Jesus. It is Martha's attitude of self-justification and trying to move Jesus, the Lord, as if He were her servant.

Nevertheless, Jesus gently chides Martha. When the disciples make mistakes and are unbelieving, he does not use language that laments, "Oh, how unbelieving they are!" When the disciples make mistakes and don't believe, he calls out to them twice, "Martha, Martha," as if he were addressing his precious daughter. It is as if Jesus is thankful for Martha's act of love and respect for her hospitality.

...There are very few people in the Bible who were called by name twice by God. Perhaps there are only seven. Martha here, Abraham the father of faith, Jacob the founder of Israel, Moses who led the Exodus, the prophet Samuel as a child, Simon Peter who betrayed Jesus, and the apostle Paul. Here are a few Scriptures just in case you are wondering.

**Genesis 22:11**, "But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.'"

**Exodus 3:4**, "When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'"

**Acts 9:4**, "And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'"

Therefore, in honor of Martha, I say again to you all. Do the Word. Put what you have heard into practice in your daily lives.

### **3. Hearing the word**

Martha was annoyed and was chastised by Jesus. She was doing a good deed of hospitality to Jesus, but she got sidetracked. What caused her frustration and anger? What caused her to break down? Listen to the words of Jesus.

**Luke 10:42**, "One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

What is revealed here is the truth that without hearing the Word of God, the message of Jesus, one can never do good. There is only one thing that is necessary." means, "Martha, Martha, there is only one thing you need to do." Martha does good things, but she lacks one thing. It is very important and unavoidable: to hear the Word.

Why is it important to hear the Word of God? It is because motivation is important. Unless the attitude of the heart is made sound, it is impossible to do truly good deeds. Even if you can do well on the surface, the true nature of your heart will eventually come out. It is true that Martha, who works diligently, looks respectable on the outside. But in her heart, anger flared up and swelled with critical thoughts, and finally exploded.

No amount of fine deeds can change your heart. What is in Martha's heart is about herself. It is her own thoughts, her own plans, her own hidden thoughts of self-approval and self-justification. So when Martha complained to Jesus, she repeated three times, "I, I, I." It is as if my sister has left me alone to entertain them. Why doesn't she help me? This reveals her self-centeredness despite the fact that she calls Jesus "Lord."

In other words, Martha has not heard the Lord Jesus' thoughts, ideas, God's plan, or God's will one bit. Martha has thought many things and done many things, but she is stuck and broken.

Although it is rarely heard of these days, the "performance-based system" has been much hyped since the bursting of the bubble economy. It is a system in which performance is evaluated based on the results of work, performance, ability, and the process leading up to it, and reflected in compensation and human resource management. Regardless of age, education, or experience, if you are able to produce results, you will receive a good salary and a high position.

However, one time I was talking with a young man in his twenties (not a Christian) who was attending a worship service, and he told me that he was exhausted by the pressure and mental stress of always having to perform well and achieve because of the performance-based evaluation system.

Certainly it is important to achieve performance and results. It is also important to evaluate efficiency and attitude in the process, as well as derive satisfaction and growth. However, even if we continue to achieve good performance and results, we will eventually fall apart. Why do so many people become exhausted, depressed, and unable to continue working? The work environment may be bad. There may be problems with relationships with supervisors and co-workers.

What is clear from today's Scriptures is that no matter how successful we are, no matter how unsuccessful we are, no matter what our circumstances, we need to hear the Word of God. We must listen to the message of Jesus. It is not only for Christians. It is necessary for everyone, even for those who are not Christians. Hearing God's Word also means

resting and getting rest. Welcoming God into your home and life as a guest and spending time with Jesus will give you true vitality.

In the first half of chapter 10, 72 people went on an evangelistic mission and came back to Jesus and reported back. Great success! They said, "Lord. Using your name, even the demons submit to us." But as Jesus probed their motives, he told them to listen to the Word of God, the message of the gospel, saying. 10:20 But do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your name is written in heaven."

Put aside your thoughts, plans, and things to do and listen to God's Word, His will, plans, thoughts, and the Jesus Message (Gospel). The Gospel, the unique word of the Bible, is an amazing message that God accepts us who are not good, no matter our failures and mistakes. No matter what sins we commit, there is forgiveness and we can try again.

This gospel message influences our attitudes and deeds. We no longer have to worry about ourselves, and we are given the impetus to love. No matter how things go wrong, your name is written in heaven and victory and joy are already given to you. Hear the Word and do it!