

Remnant Life Church
May 2, 2021
“Supernatural: The Work of Jesus
The Raising of Lazarus – Mary and Martha”
Part 3
Luke 10:38-42

In the story of Lazarus there are 4 main people we observe

- The first of course is Jesus
- The second is Lazarus
- The third and fourth are his sisters, Mary and Martha

These two are an example of women figuring prominently in the story of Jesus and His ministry

- While the entirety of the Bible takes place in a strongly patriarchal time (meaning male-dominated) that does not mean women were not important to the biblical accounts
 - In the OT we read the accounts of both Ruth and Esther
- Eve, Sarah, Rachel are all prominent in the Scripture and the history of the Hebrew people
- Even in the lineage of Jesus provided in the first chapter of Matthew there are 5 women listed one of which was a prostitute
 - Again, we see that all of God’s creation and people are a part of His perfect will

When settling on one or two people in the Bible you must be careful of some things to ensure that you are accurate in what you are reading or saying about them

- One of the primary things to watch out for is how many people in the Bible had the same name
- There are multiple Josephs, Jacobs, even more than one Jesus
- But the names we are looking at this morning are two of the most common in the New Testament
- In particular Mary – no less than six women with that name in the NT
 - Of course, the first of that name we think of is Mary, the mother of Jesus ([Luke 1-2](#))
 - There is Mary Magdalene – identified by her hometown of Magdala, a city on the SW coast of the Sea of Galilee ([Luke 7:37](#))
 - There is Mary the mother of the disciples James and John ([Matt 27:55-61](#))
 - Mary, the mother of John Mark – her son the author of the 2nd and probably first written Gospel of the NT ([Acts 12:12](#))
 - There is also Mary of Rome – we know her only by the greeting of Paul in [Romans 16:6](#)
 - Then there is Mary the sister of Lazarus ([Luke 10:38-42](#))
- To know which Mary you are reading about is to understand the context in which the name is used
 - It is not difficult as each one is pretty specific
 - But you still must be aware

Again, Mary and Martha are sisters but like many siblings they are very different

READ – Luke 10:38-41

(Illustration story)

- This presents a good analogy of two primary sides of the Christian today
 - Many know all the words
 - Can recite a host of Bible verses
 - Can pray with great eloquence both in private and public
 - They are involved in every activity of the church
 - Doors are open, they are there
 - They sound and look to everyone they come in contact with like a true, devoted, and sincere Christian
 - And they are a Christian
 - But there is a distance in their relationship with Jesus because of how busy they are

- But then there are those who say little
 - May have little biblical knowledge
 - Never pray in public
 - Would have trouble witnessing
 - But they have a closeness to the Father that is unshakable
 - They know the Shepherd

- Not only is this a good representation of many Christians, but it is also a close description of the two women of this story of Lazarus

Martha was the busy one who was always active and doing for both God and others

Mary was content to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to Him, be close to Him, and worship Him

- Neither was wrong, but Jesus said that one way was better
- It is a matter of priority
 - Is what you do the most important aspect of your Christianity or does your relationship with Jesus determine what you do?

Now when their brother died, both sisters had a brief crisis of faith

- **John 11:21** – *Lord, Martha said to Jesus, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.*
- **John 11:37** – Mary says the exact same thing to Jesus that Martha had
- But it was a brief one because of their relationship with Jesus

What we learn from these two women, and must have reinforced in our hearts and minds, is that Christianity is based on relationships

Matt 22: 34-40 - *Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and*

with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Jesus answered them by saying the commandments are all about relationships

- The first is your relationship with God
- The second are your relationships with each other
- This is why when a person claims to be a Christian but cannot get along with the people around him or her, I will always question their relationship with Jesus

Mary and Martha are the picture of what is right to focus on as well as what can get in the way

- Too many Christians believe the most important thing is what they DO instead of what has been done for them
- Martha focused on what she could do for Jesus
- Mary was focused on what Jesus was doing for her through His teaching, wisdom, and friendship

This is what separates Christianity from all the other religions of the world

- The Muslim prays 5 times a day and does good deeds in a hopeful effort that, in the end, they hope will outweigh the bad deeds of his life
- The Jewish leaders of Jesus day focused solely on keeping the Law
- The Jehovah Witness believes it is about telling as many people as they can about their faith that gets them into heaven
- The Mormon must earn his salvation by evangelizing his faith to others
- Hindus believe that their actions and thoughts on earth determine their status in the afterlife – after multiple reincarnations if necessary

Only Christianity relies on what has been done for us and not on what we do

- It is a gift of salvation that cannot be earned
- It is born out of the love of God for His fallen creation
- Our relationship has been repaired, made whole again, through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ

And so which sister best represents your relationship with Jesus this morning?

- Are you so busy doing the work of God, trying to earn your place in heaven that you are missing what is most important, to be in close relationship with Jesus?
- Or are you content, like Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus, knowing that there is nothing you can do to earn His mercy and grace – it has been given to you

And so like the actor and the old preacher, do you know the 23rd Psalm this morning, or do you know the shepherd?