

Character Studies: Martha and Mary

Passages

Read Luke 10:38-42, John 11:17-44, and John 12:1-8



Tim's Tools

Go over the passages again, making sure to note the *tone and feel* of the passages, the different nuances and interpretations of *different translations* and any *repetition* present within the passages.

Discussion

What are some of the similarities between Martha and Mary?

What are their differences?

How did they contribute to the overall story of the Bible?

Who do you relate to more? Why?

What about the other members of your small group?

Luke 10:38-42

New Living Translation (NLT)

³⁸As 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. ³⁹Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. ⁴⁰But 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."

⁴¹But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴²There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

New King James Version (NKJV)

³⁸Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

⁴¹And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴²But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

John 11:17-44

New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁷When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. ¹⁸Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. ²⁰When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I

know that God will give you whatever you ask."

²³Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴"Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

²⁵Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. ²⁶Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. ²⁷Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

²⁷"Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." ²⁸Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." ²⁹So Mary immediately went to him.

³⁰Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. ³¹When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. ³²When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. ³⁴"Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Then Jesus wept. ³⁶The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" ³⁷But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

³⁸Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. ³⁹"Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

⁴⁰Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" ⁴¹So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴²You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." ⁴³Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁷So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

²⁰Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

²⁸And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come

and is calling for you.”²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was[Ⓜ] in the place where Martha met Him.³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.”[Ⓜ]

³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.³⁴ And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

³⁷ And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by

this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying.[Ⓜ] And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.”⁴³ Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

John 12:1-8

New Living Translation (NLT)

12 Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead.² A dinner was prepared in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate[Ⓜ] with him.³ Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar[Ⓜ] of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus’ feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

⁴ But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said,⁵ “That perfume was worth

a year’s wages.[Ⓜ] It should have been sold and the money given to the poor.”⁶ Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself.

⁷ Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial.⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

New King James Version (NKJV)

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead,[Ⓜ] whom He had raised from the dead.² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

⁴ But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, who would betray Him, said,⁵ “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii[Ⓜ] and given to the poor?”⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

⁷ But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept[Ⓜ] this for the day of My burial.⁸ For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”