

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 10- Luke 10:38-42** 207- The One Necessary Thing

June 23, 2013

Luke 10:38-42

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 *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

To the Glory of God

The Puritans were a group of people who changed the course of human history- not because they built buildings or waged war- but because they studied the Scriptures and preached and taught like nobody before them since the Apostles and like nobody after them save for just a handful.

I am in awe of the Puritans and routinely read a sermon that was preached by one of them that has to do with the subject that I am dealing with- to humble me and to help me see my great need to leave my childishness and my shallowness and my lukewarmness and dig deep into the Word of God. What these men taught- answers questions that I am not smart enough to even ask and their writings serve to break me and to make me see my great need for Grace.

A number of years ago- I tried to introduce this Church to the Puritans by encouraging you to leave the mindless babble that is television and most of the internet and to read one Puritan Book every month- which would have required that you read an average of about 4 pages per day. And the reason why I wanted to do that was because these men wrote about every conceivable Biblical subject and they went into those subjects so deeply that each book added to my Sanctification. I am trying again to encourage you to meet these men and to understand what they wrote by taking up the “Puritan Challenge”.

But one of the things that the Puritans taught that has affected me so profoundly is that if anyone wants to truly understand the Bible- then they have to get into what these men called, “The Logic of Scripture”. And one of the verses that encourages this effort is found in **Isaiah 55:8&9** that says:

8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD .

9 “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

... which basically says that God doesn’t think or do the way that we think and do. God’s Mind is Infinite and is perfectly Pure and so His Logic is vastly *different* from the logic and the reason of a sinful fallen mind that is very limited and very finite and very corrupt.

And most people would nod their heads and agree with that statement but then they will turn right around and place their *own* human engineered logic based upon their own fallen reasoning into what they read in the Word of God- which is exactly what we *must not* do.

You see, in order to understand the Bible correctly- we need to try to “Stand in The Shoes of God” so to speak and to use historical and literal and grammatical tools and to beg God to illuminate our minds as we struggle to find out- not what that verse or that Passage means to us or how it might benefit us or how it might serve our purposes- but to labor to find out what that verse or Passage meant to the human writer who penned down those infallible and inerrant Words as he was moved upon by God the Holy Spirit- which is the only thing that really matters. So our struggle must be to find out what the living God has

said about that subject.

Now anyone who has spent any time at all in the Bible knows that most of the time- the Bible is crystal clear as to what it means. This is a concept that Theologians call, “The Perspicuity of Scripture” which is just a fancy way of saying that the basic meaning of the 66 Books of the Holy Bible is so clear and so simple that a child can understand it.

So for example- even a child can know from the Bible that all men are sinners and cannot do anything to earn or deserve eternal life and so therefore – so we need a Savior. And a child will know that this Savior must be perfectly sinless and Almighty so as to forgive us and to steal us and rip us from the tyrannical grip of satan and to deliver us into the Kingdom of God and make us Righteous. And so even a child will know that Jesus is that Savior and that He died on the Cross and was raised again on the third day to save us from our sins and the penalty of those sins which is the everlasting Wrath of God.

But even though that is true and the basic meaning of the Bible is so simple and so clear that a child can understand it- there are verses and Passages that are taught in the Bible that seem to be strange and that seem to be at odds with normal human thinking and there are concepts in the Bible that are very deep and that are unbelievably profound and that are hard to grasp and that are easy to misunderstand and easy to twist and to get wrong- which is why so many do get them wrong.

And when you come across those verses or those passages and those concepts- many people in our day just simply skip over them or they seek to apply simplistic and humanly engineered logic to them to try to explain them.

And when you ask why they do this- the answers that are the most common are also the answers that are the most shameful and that reveal just how far we have really fallen from where those who came before us stood. Answers like, *“This simply takes too much time to try to figure these things out”* or *“Who cares about these issues anyway?”* or *“We don’t need to worry about all this- we just need to love Jesus.”*

And so these people judge these Biblical issues to not be valuable enough care about them and to not be worth the time it would take to do the “heavy lifting” and to struggle with them and to study them and examine them so they will know and the result is that there is today- among far too many in the modern Church- an *embarrassing* lack of

Biblical knowledge and an *inexcusable* ignorance of vital and important Biblical Truths and a continual *twisting* of verses and very sloppy exegesis to satisfy their spiritual laziness and the result of God's people today not knowing God's Word anymore is that ancient heresies and false teachings that the Church of Jesus confronted and exposed and rejected many centuries ago- are making a huge comeback in our day and so we have an entire generation of narcissistic "pew- sitters" who are being taught wrongly and who believe a lie.

And one of the tools that has proven to be very useful to me in my *own* effort to grasp and understand these hard and strange and odd verses and Passages is that concept of the Puritans where I struggle to get into God's Shoes and to look at that verse or that Passage or that concept from God's Perspective and not my own which is what they called, "The Logic of Scripture"- which is to allow the Bible to interpret itself.

And the reason why I am telling you all this this morning is because the Passage that Brother Andy just read to us is one of those odd and strange Passages that seem to go against the logic of the human mind and which teach a basic Principle that you will never get from the pagan fallen world or your own human mind in a million years.

You see, we live in a very "type A" culture. Many today live a very fast-pace life. It seems as though life is speeding up and getting faster and faster. Many see no alternative but to just get on that treadmill of life and begin to run. We give ourselves with abandon to our jobs and careers. We are told that we are to "*find our passion*" and then "*live into it*"; we are told to "find our purpose" and then "*give ourselves to that purpose*". That is what the world calls us to.

This present evil world rewards accomplishments and action. If you are laid back and not aggressive- you will always be on the short end of the stick as it pertains to material and financial gain in this pagan godless world system. Because the fallen world system teaches us that if you want something - you have to reach out and take it- you must charge ahead and "make things happen" which is why we look highly on accomplished people- regardless of how ungodly they may be.

But God's Word calls us to something much different than that. It calls you and I, as believers, to something very odd and strange that does not fit in with the system of this pagan world. God's Word calls us

to sit and to ponder and to relish and to enjoy and to savor Jesus Christ- to sit at His Feet and listen to Him. It calls us not to action for us to accomplish much- but to a valuing much of the Savior Who did it all.

1,000 years before this moment with Jesus here in this Passage- King David wrote this in **Psalm 27:4** and he exclaimed:

One thing I have asked from the LORD , that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

Now for many years that verse confused me. At the beginning- David says that he has asked one single thing from the Lord and then he seems to go on to talk about three different things:

1. To dwell in the House of the Lord all his days
2. To be hold the Beauty of the Lord
3. To inquire in His Temple

But then as I applied “The Logic of Scripture” and began to allow the Bible to interpret itself- I found out that all three of these things are the same thing- the one single thing that David said that he asked the Lord and the one thing that eh said he would seek after.

So to dwell in the House of the Lord all his days is the same thing as beholding the Beauty of the Lord and to behold the Beauty of the Lord is the same thing as inquiring in His Temple and to inquire in His Temple is the same thing as dwelling in the House of the Lord. And I suggest to you that that is what is going on here in this Passage at the end of **Luke 10**. Mary is doing what David talked about and what David prayed for and what David sought after 1,000 years earlier- to behold the Beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His Temple and to dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

This Passage is a wonderful little story that appears nowhere else in any of the Gospel records and so this is a unique and special account that fits wonderfully into the purpose of the great historian Luke as he writes the history of the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ. It occupies a very important place in the flow of this gospel and even more importantly should occupy a very important place in all of our lives, all of our thinking.

Now as our culture continues to drift further and further away from God-we become more frenetic, more frantic, more disjointed, more disconnected, more mobile, more involved- and as life speeds up and becomes literally engulfed in so many different things- the word "priority" seems to be constantly on the lips of people who are trying to sort out life and get some kind of pecking order in terms of the things they need to be committed to.

We have entire sections in book stores about setting priorities and you can hire people to come in and teach you how to prioritize things. It's really become a very, very popular word because it seems to be a very great need in our complex time.

And when we use the word "priority" we just sort of use it on its own. It sort of exists in its own little world. And when we say "priority" we usually mean the most important thing, or the main thing, or that things that is the most necessary.

But let's take time to dig a little deeper into that word. It is helpful to know something about the word "priority," it is simply a form of the word: "prior". Now we all know what the word "prior" means, it means: before, or ahead of, or preceding. So a priority then is something that comes before everything else. A priority precedes everything else. It's ahead of everything else. It is then what is supreme, what is essential, what is foundational, what is preeminent, what is antecedent to everything that follows. So when you talk about priority, you're really saying what in my life comes before anything else? What is before anything else and everything else?

So if I were to ask the average guy on the street the question, "*What is your priority?*" there might be a lot of different answers. But if I ask a genuine Christian that question- there should only be one single answer:

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

So if I were to say to you, "*Write down on a piece of paper the number one priority for my life as a Christian, my life in the world, what is it?*" What would you write down? What is THE number one priority? Not two, not three- number one? You know, church and family and job and loving the Lord and whatever, whatever, witnessing,

and...I'm not talking about *priorities*, I'm talking about *priority*— one and there is only one.

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

And over in the New Testament in **Philippians 3:10-15**— the Apostle Paul echoed this when he said:

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

So the Old Testament saint, David, had reduced his life to one thing— one single priority and he said it was to behold the Beauty of the Lord. And Paul said his one single priority was to know Jesus Christ and to be conformed to His Likeness. And here in the Passage that Brother Andy just read to you— we have a statement from the Lips of the Lord Himself in **Luke 10:42a**:

but *only* one thing is necessary...

So not only did David understand there was only one priority, not only did Paul in the New Testament understand there was only one pursuit, but our Lord Jesus Himself says here that there is only one single priority.

Now I am not saying that there are not difficulties in the Christian life and that there are not any challenges and frustrations and disappointments. I have tasted of very deep and profound

disappointments in my life. And I'm not saying that the Christian life is not demanding and that interpreting Scripture correctly is not demanding and that applying Scripture is not demanding and that struggling to understanding the full Counsel of God doesn't tax all of my capacity. But what I *am* saying is behind all of that there is one simple thing that is the Christian's single priority:

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

Now the good news is that there is only one real priority- so you don't have to look for seventeen. But the bad news is that there is only one single priority and so if you miss it- you've missed it all.

So whatever it is that is prior to everything else, whatever it is that is antecedent to everything else, whatever it is that is preliminary to everything else, whatever it is that comes first defines, informs and motivates everything else. And so if you get this one thing- the rest of the Christian life unfolds. And if you miss this one thing- you miss it all. So let's find out what it is. Let's begin by looking at **Luke 10:38**:

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

So the good news here is that Mary chose the one single priority. And the bad news is that Martha completely missed it. So let's begin our examination by understanding a little background information here. Why does Luke put this story in here?

Well, we are now launching into the last six months of Jesus' earthly Life. So starting with this Passage and going all the way until His triumphal entry into Jerusalem in the last week of His Life- Jesus is going to be on the road and He is going to be very, very busy.

Now Jesus has already been on the road for a number of months since He ended His Ministry in Galilee. He's been going from town to town and village to village proclaiming Who He is. He even sent an advance team of 70 men- 35 different teams of two men each- to get the town and the village ready for His arrival. And sometimes the 70 were received and sometimes they weren't. Sometimes people took them in and believed their message and were wonderfully rescued from the

kingdom of darkness and demonic power and sometimes people completely rejected them.

But after sending the 70 and having them get every little town and village where He was going to go ready, it's now the last six months and Jesus is going to visit those places Personally. So we're going to be on the road with Him as verse 38 begins:

Now as they were traveling along...

...so we're going to be traveling with Jesus until He finally arrives at Jerusalem to face His Divinely appointed Death on the Cross.

Now the time frame from Chapter 10:38 into the 19th Chapter is primarily going to focus on Jesus' *teaching* Ministry. So these next several Chapters contain a six month season of great and deep and profound Teaching from the incarnate God.

The result of this advancement of teaching is that miracles will now take a secondary role. From now until Jesus' Resurrection-miracles are only occasionally mentioned. The emphasis is going to be on the Lord's perfect Teaching. And the only students through this last six months of Jesus' Life will primarily be His Apostles and Disciples. So this is their final semester in preparation for being endued with Power from on High and going down the steps of that Upper Room and taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth. So this is their final preparation to proclaim the Will and Word of God and to prepare some of them to be moved upon by God the Holy Spirit to pen the radical New Covenant. So what dominates this section is Teaching. And Dr. Luke isn't really even interested in where Jesus goes.

Here we read in verse 38 that He just entered an unnamed village. And over in Chapter 11:1 Jesus was praying in "a certain place". And it's going to be like that until Chapter 18:35 when we finally get a town mentioned by name and it's Jericho.

So the good doctor is not concerned about where Jesus is geographically. And the performance of supernatural signs and wonders and miracles are only occasionally discussed. The main focus here is on the content of Jesus' Teaching and so we're really not sure that this event is in a proper chronological sequence. We can't hold Luke to that standard. So this is not necessarily in the time order that Jesus taught all of this.

But what *is* very important is that we learn what Jesus taught. So this is private instruction from the incarnate God of the universe. And so it is in many ways the richest time in this whole Gospel Story written by Luke.

Now we've already learned what it means to be a disciple- to actually and in reality follow Jesus. It is to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him. And now we're going to find out how truly regenerate disciples think. They think like their Lord thinks because they have learned His Ways and they have been taught His Ways and so we're going to know how Jesus thinks because we're going to learn directly from Him.

And to begin our lesson- we're going to take Mary's place- which is sitting at Jesus' Feet and we're going to get as close as we can to Jesus and our job is to going to be like Mary- our only job is going to be to sit and listen to what Jesus says. And my job is going to be to tell you what Jesus said and what He meant by what He said. And Jesus is going to teach us about prayer and He's going to teach us about satan and more about demons. And He's going to teach us about Divine Judgment and about hypocrisy and about persecution and about suffering and about the Holy Spirit. And Jesus is going to warn us about greed. And He's going to instruct us about true contentment and about how to use money and how to give and how to be a good and faithful steward.

So there are going to be lessons on unity and lessons on righteousness and holiness. And there is instruction on Divine Justice, and on humility, and the danger of pride and on the cost of loyalty to Christ and on the Kingdom of God and how to enter it.

Jesus is going to teach us about how heaven rejoices when sinners are converted. And He's even going to teach us about divorce and about hell and about penitence and about forgiveness and a lot about faith.

And this is overwhelming and so there's only one correct place for us to be to learn all of this and that is to be at His feet just like Mary was. And that's why Luke puts this incredibly wonderful story here- it's as if the Teacher comes into our lives and says, "All right, students, sit down, we're going to begin class." And this class lasts for six months and ends with the unbelievably horrible Death and glorious Resurrection of the Teacher. Now in reality I expect we are going to be in these next several Chapters over a number of years because of the depth of Jesus' Teaching- but the literal time frame is only six months.

Now what we have to understand is that the Lord's Teaching is very radical. The Lord's Teaching calls those who are taught to depart radically from Jewish conventional wisdom. So some of the very familiar Parables will take on new and powerful meanings.

Now it is a great privilege to hear the Absolute Truth from the very Mouth of God Incarnate. And the most important reality in the whole universe is Divine Truth. And surprisingly- it's not just important for people who know Jesus Christ- but it is important for those who do not. But sadly there are many people in the modern Church who either don't understand that or who don't care.

You see, it's not just atheists, agnostics, liberals, pragmatists and mystics, or even the indifferent who are the enemies of the Truth and who refuse to listen to Him. Martha was not an enemy of Jesus. Martha loved Jesus. She believed in Jesus and was a close friend of Jesus. But she just didn't get it. She missed the one single priority. And while neither Martha or Mary were in any official ministry- that didn't change the priority because the priority to sit at the Feet of Jesus and hear the Word of God belongs not just to people in official ministry- but to every believer. And it is to this one single priority that we are called.

So the one single priority for all Christians is to hear and understand and value the revealed Word of God because that is prior to every other spiritual duty- which is motivated by, informed by, and defined by Scripture. And this story makes that so clear.

So the number one priority is to hear what God has said. And if that's your responsibility- then what is mine? It is to tell you what God has said. And even though this is very basic and simple- it is yet very rare in our day.

How many times have I heard from people who say, "We cannot find a church anywhere in our place where the pastor will tell us what is in the Bible." That is absolutely unthinkable and yet it is becoming common. So let's begin. Look again at **Luke 10:38**:

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

Now if you want a point of contact it is back in **Luke 9:51** that tells us that Jesus resolutely set His Face to go to Jerusalem. And so here in **Luke 10:38**- He's still on His way. And He's headed in that direction but

He's crisscrossing back and forth- **Luke 17:11** says that Jesus was passing between Samaria and Galilee on the way to Jerusalem, back and forth crisscrossing all around visiting towns and villages.

Then Dr. Luke says:

... He entered a village...

... and we know the name of the village- even though Luke doesn't tell us here because **John 11&12** tells us that the name of the village was Bethany- which is where Mary and Martha lived with their brother Lazarus. And Bethany is just a little under two miles east of the eastern wall of Jerusalem- just over the top of the Mount of Olives and down the backside.

Now this may have been Jesus' first visit to Bethany but between this time and the last time when Lazarus was raised from the dead- there was other visits because by the time you get to the account of Lazarus' resurrection- Jesus knows these people very well. But for now, Jesus comes to this village of Bethany for the first time. And it says there in verse 38 at the end:

... and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home

... and the language here indicates that Jesus didn't know her because Luke doesn't say "a friend" or even "Martha", it just says "**a woman named Martha**".

Now the name, "Martha" is Aramaic for "mistress" as in "the master/mistress of the house". And that is why Luke tells us that it was *her* house. So that tells us that between the two women and Lazarus- Martha was the oldest. And it is also likely that she was a widow since no husband is named.

So Martha welcomed Jesus. And that is the Greek word, *dechomai* which means: *to receive* and *hupodechomai* means to embrace and to entertain as a guest. So she was very happy to have Jesus in her house- she was excited to have Him because she and Mary and Lazarus all believed in Jesus.

Now how do we know that? Verse 40 tells us that Martha called Jesus,

“Lord”

... which is the word, “*kurios*,” So these people had at some point embraced the Truth that Jesus was God. And here Jesus was coming to their town and Martha rushed to take the initiative to receive Him into her home. And remember the instructions that Jesus gave to the 70- when you go into a house and they'll take you there, stay there, remember? Stay there. So Martha's goal was to take Jesus in and serve Him with warm hospitality.

Now this hospitality is only equaled by Abraham and Sarah having God and two angels come for dinner. Here comes God and the apostles and whoever else and Martha makes extensive preparations to serve them well. But she was not alone in the house. Her brother, Lazarus, is not mentioned here, but her sister is. Verse 39 says,

"She [Martha] had a sister called Mary."

Now that's a rather vague mention and it doesn't tell us much about Mary. She's very, very vaguely mentioned and yet she becomes the central figure in this story and she becomes the example for all of us for the rest of our Christian experience to follow. Isn't that strange?

The reality is that we don't know anything about Mary's temperament or about her personality. We don't think of Mary as some kind of necessarily contemplative person. You simply can't draw those kinds of conclusions from what we have here. All we know about her is that when Jesus came to her house- she sat down and listened to the Lord's Words- that's all we know.

Now when Jesus went anywhere- He taught. When He came to town- He taught; when He came to a house- He taught. He was always coming to teach because He came to speak the Word of Truth. And Mary is there listening. And Luke phrases it like this in verse 39 that Mary:

... was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.

And she was not only listening to the Lord's Word- but Mary was doing something that was remarkable for a woman in the 1st Century- she was seated at Jesus' Feet. The rabbis of that day would have never

allowed that. It was frowned on that a woman could learn at all- but if she was to learn *anything* she was relegated to learn only from the back of the room with the animals and slaves- but never up front and never this close to the teacher.

It wasn't until Jesus did things like this and through the radical Teachings of the Apostles that women were given dignity and honor. That is why it is always fascinating to me to hear the anger and the vitriol of radical feminist as they spew out the most vile comments about Christianity when it was the Teachings of Jesus and the Apostles that gave women dignity in the first place. Everywhere in the world where Christianity is dominant- women are treated with respect and kindness and everywhere that any other religion or world philosophy rules- women are treated as harshly as they were 6,000 years ago. And feminist do this for only one reason- they absolutely bristle at the notion that they are commanded by the God of the Universe to humble themselves to the authority of their own husbands. And what feminism does and has done- it indoctrinates and deceives women to rebel against the clear teaching of Scripture to liberate women economically and sexually- where they are now free to abandon their husbands and children to pursue their own career and they are now free to engage in sexuality absent a husband because birth control can keep away unwanted pregnancies and abortion can solve the problem if the birth control doesn't work.

And of course is the troubling fact that today- after 50 years of feminist ideology dominating the American Culture- we have more divorces than ever before; an epidemic of illegitimate births; and more women are in poverty and ignorance today than ever before. Women are abused, neglected and used as slabs of meat for the pleasure of evil men today more than ever before- yea- you've come along way, baby.

But Mary's position also indicates her intense interest in Jesus' teaching. She got as close as she could get so she wouldn't miss a single word. She was literally riveted to the most powerful, clear, truthful Teacher Who ever spoke. This is a perfect example of not only sitting and listening to Jesus –but of actually *enjoying* the Presence of Jesus and of magnifying His Worth.

You see I do not believe that we can actually give God the Glory He deserves unless and until we actually come to a place where we

enjoy our time with Him; here we relish our service to Him and where we truly delight ourselves in His Presence.

You see, I believe that we choose what we value and what we respect and what we love and what we enjoy every day. So for example- when you choose to watch a game on TV instead of coming to Church- you make Jesus look far less valuable than the game. When you choose to barbeque on Sunday instead of gathering together with your brothers and sisters on the Lord's Day- you make Jesus look real bad and really insignificant. When you choose to go shopping instead of gathering for Prayer Meeting- you make Jesus look inferior to whatever is on sale.

People like that are hard pressed to say that Jesus is the sweetest Name they know. People like that cannot say that they delight themselves in the Lord. People like that do not enjoy their time with Jesus- they enjoy the pleasures of this world far more and far better than they enjoy Jesus. And I believe that God's Word says that continual expressions like that are a sign that the soul has never been truly regenerate. But what is the cry of genuine believers?

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

So there Mary is- right alongside of Jesus- sitting at His Feet. And that's a term we use today. "Sitting at His Feet". For example- when you go to school- you are "sitting at the feet" of a certain scholar. This is a borrowed term from the ancient world. You see, everybody on earth is a student of somebody else. Nobody is self-taught- even though many people have deceived themselves into thinking that they are. Some people will say that the Holy Spirit teaches them directly- that they go before God and the Lord comes down and teaches them directly- but that simply isn't true. People say that to make themselves look really super-spiritual.

But the reality is that they will quote other preachers or other statements from books that they have read or they will use historical arguments to make their point- proving that what they just said isn't true.

Or worse than that- they will stumble into the very same traps and pitfalls that people fell into many centuries ago which they could

easily avoid if they weren't so self-righteous and just humbled themselves to sit at somebody else's feet and be taught from them.

So nobody is self-taught- everybody on earth is a student of somebody else. So the issue is not that some people are students and other are not- but who is your teacher. And in His Absolute Wisdom- God Almighty established the Office of Teacher for the New Testament Church precisely because the Word of God must be learned and it must be taught. So we need to find godly holy men to teach us the Word of God and sit at their feet and learn from them- realizing that all men have clay feet and all men are subject to error and all men are prone to be way ward at some point.

So for example- I sit at the feet of men like:

- ✓ Augustine
- ✓ Martin Luther
- ✓ John Calvin
- ✓ John Knox
- ✓ Jonathan Edwards
- ✓ Matthew Henry
- ✓ The Puritans
- ✓ Charles Spurgeon
- ✓ S Lewis Johnson
- ✓ James Boice

Giants in Church History who by God's Grace and empowered by God's Spirit and through God's Word shaped and formed the Church so that it remains to this day. And over the last 25 years- I have become a student of these men and I read what these men wrote and I study what they said and I struggle to learn from them through their writings and they have helped me to learn God's Word better and deeper and more thoroughly than I have ever known before without them.

They certainly were not perfect and they made terrible mistakes- but they were more right about more things than anyone else in their day. And that is just the Truth. And that is why I can recommend them to you today and invite you to sit at their feet with me.

I also "sit at the feet" of other men who are still alive today- men like:

- ✓ John MacArthur
- ✓ John Piper
- ✓ RC Sproul
- ✓ Paul Washer
- ✓ Mark Dever
- ✓ Don Carson
- ✓ Mark Keiler

... and several others- who also have clay feet and who also have made terrible mistakes- but who are today more right about more things than anyone else I know- which is why I can wholeheartedly recommend them to you and invite you to sit at their feet with me.

But if you insist on trying to be self- taught- then the only authority that you listen to is yourself and you have cut yourself off from literally hundreds of sources of wonderful teaching and sound wisdom and Biblical logic that would help you avoid the mistakes that others have made who came before us.

But back in the 1st Century- women didn't have that privilege. Some rabbis wrote that it was useless to teach a woman. But those rabbis were wrong and Mary didn't care about conventional wisdom, she was there listening to the Lord's words- and the closer the better. And so this lady demonstrates the attitude of a true believer.

But how can you tell a true believer from a false one? A true believer hears the Word of God and they do it. A true believe desires to be in the Presence of Jesus. Mary had a desire to hear the Word of God and to savor the Beauty of Jesus and be near to Him to sit at His Feet.

Here was the Lord and of all places in her little village, of all places her house, in her little room and she was sitting at His feet and hearing the very truth of God from the lips of the Lord of heaven Himself. And her priority was to get as close as she could to Jesus and to hear, to listen, to love that Truth and to believe that Truth and to act on that Truth.

But sadly many people today can become distracted from the Word. Let's meet one. Look at the first part of verse 40:

But Martha was distracted with all her preparations...

Now the verb, “distracted” means: to be pulled away, to be dragged away. So Martha was fussing around with the food and she was doing whatever she needed to do to prepare the meal and to get the mat where the Lord was going to sleep and other arrangements for whoever was with Him and so Martha was concerned about having everything arranged the way it needed to be arranged and whatever water they needed and whatever they needed to wash and all of that, and she was *pulled away* and *distracted* from what?

From the priority of listening to the Word of the Lord.

So was pulled away from beholding the Beauty of the Lord and inquiring in His Temple and of dwelling in the House of the Lord forever. And the Apostle Levi quoted Jesus about this back in **Matthew 13:22** when he said:

And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

So forget the bed- Martha, forget the arrangements, forget the meal- behold Jesus! But Martha was literally dragged away from the one necessary thing with her much serving. She was all caught up in stuff and missed Him. But we need to know that the Bible says that Martha loved the Lord and she had a desire to listen- but she was pulled away by the busyness of physical preparation.

Now there is nothing wrong with hospitality. It's commanded in the Bible. **Romans 12:13, 1Peter 4:10**, it's a Biblical Command to show kindness and hospitality to strangers. It's wrong not to. And there's also nothing wrong with a woman being a keeper at home, right? **Titus 2:4&5**, women are commanded to be keepers at home- keep the house. And there's nothing wrong with entertaining guests either, **1Timothy 5:10** says that a widow who was childless couldn't be put on the list of Church support unless she lodged strangers and shown hospitality. A widow with Children should receive help from her children first. So all these things are good. It's good to do those things. So Martha's devotion is commendable.

And, of course, she was doing it all for the Lord- Who is the Guest above all other guests. But in the process of serving- Martha just had her priorities completely twisted. So she should have forgotten how nice everything was and realize that God Almighty in human flesh is sitting right there- speaking Divine Truth. She's fussing about the soup and trying to get done what she wants done the way she wants it done and she completely loses sight of a rare privilege- to hear the Lord of the universe teach her privately and personally.

But her sister Mary took the privilege and she got it. And it was bad enough that Martha's priorities were all messed up- but once your priorities are messed up- your attitude gets messed up too. So she starts losing the joy of her service and she becomes agitated. She becomes frustrated. And then she gets mad. That is certainly not the right attitude by which to dispense your hospitality. So at the very core of her exasperation- she acted in a way that shows how twisted she really was and how easy it is- even for us- to start out doing something good- but because you either don't understand what is the one priority or you don't care- that which is good, creates selfishness which leads to frustration, and then you do something that's outrageous because you can't contain your bad attitude. Look at the end of verse 40:

... 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."

Now Martha should have just gone in there and sat down next to Mary and listened to Jesus too. The Lord didn't care about all the stuff Martha was doing. He didn't care about the meal- He came to teach the Truth. If He ate or didn't eat- it wouldn't matter to Him or if He slept or not- it wasn't the one necessary thing.

But then Martha crosses another line- she began to indict Jesus. She comes up to Jesus and she says this, "*Lord, do You not care?*" That's unbelievable. What an indictment. "*Do You not care?*" I mean, that is one of the most horrible statements ever made by a human being to Jesus. Do you mean the One on Whom you cast all your care because He cares for you? That One? He doesn't care? That is a bitter attack and a sinful and wicked indictment of the only sinless man Who ever lived. So Martha is completely out of control at this point- she's way over the top. This is what we call, "*She's lost it.*" It's like saying to Jeus, "*Well,*

are You just going to stand there or sit there, whatever posture Jesus was in, and just keep talking about eternal Truths and Divine life-changing, soul-transforming, sin-shattering, heavenly blessing producing joy, giving peace, bringing glorious truth and ignore the fact that the soup is getting cold?"

So Martha was all caught up in the bread that perishes. She was worried about the bread that feeds the body and Mary was into the bread that feeds the soul. What a skewed view. And finally she begins to manifest all the works of the flesh. And she's gone passed accusing the Lord to commanding the Lord and says,

... Then tell her to help me

... so this is a very bossy lady. And all this sin comes out of her because she has a twisted priority.

But before we condemn Martha too much- we need to examine what is it that keeps us from being in Church to hear the Word of God? Can you work time with Jesus into your busy schedule every week? What lame non-priority excuses occupies you on Sunday mornings or Sunday evenings and Wednesday Evenings when you could hear the Word of God?

Sometimes women stay home to fix the roast. Sometimes there's a soccer game or a golf match or a repair job- which are really nothing more than fouled-up priorities and being preoccupied with things that are only going to irritate, frustrate and make you mad when you should be sitting at the Feet of Jesus and hearing His Word.

And if that's what you are supposed to do, then I know what I'm supposed to do, and as long as I'm here I'll do my part- if you'll do yours. I promise to study hard to prepare you very rich and balanced meals of Gods' Word if you promise to come and listen to Jesus and sit at His Feet. Deal?

So when we look at Martha and we wonder if her priorities are twisted- we need to look at your own life and ask if ours are just as twisted. I love to hear the teaching of the Word of God. Many of you do as well. But there are some Marthas here as well as a lot of Marys, and while those are too busy to sit at Jesus' Feet and listen- the others work it in as often as they can.

And so this is an indictment of twisted priorities. You allow yourself to get sucked into all the unnecessary things that only lead to greater frustration. And then you become condemning of those who are doing the right thing trying to justify yourself.

Now, you know, the Lord could have said to her, "*Whoa...back off, Martha,*" like we might. But He didn't. He was very gracious to her. Look at verse 41:

But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;

Now make no mistake about this- this is a rebuke- but it's a *compassionate* rebuke. "*Martha, Martha, you are worried,*" And the Greek word here is *merimnao*, which means: *to be unduly concerned*, "and the Greek word for "bothered" means: *to be troubled*.

So this is corrective- but it's kind. It was good to do what she did- but just not when it was time to hear the Word of God. And then Jesus makes this amazing statement in verse 42:

but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

1,000 years before this day- King David said, "I just seek Your face, I just want to see Your beauty." Paul said, "I want to be like You, I want to see Your beauty, I want to be like You, I want to love You." Well all that boils down to one thing. One single priority- one necessary thing:

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

Let's pray.