

Martha's Lesson Pastor Jim Alblas Pioneer Christian Reformed Church

In the last few days before Jesus went to the cross, one of the things He did was stop by the home of Mary and Martha. That visit provided a wonderful lesson for His two friends, particularly for Martha, and it's a lesson that's still helpful to us today. You can find the account of Jesus' visit in Luke 10:38-42, but what follows is a retelling of that story from Martha's perspective. As you read, imagine as though Martha is talking to you.

I'm just a little overwhelmed today. Do you ever have it where something really hits you? I just experienced that. If it's alright with you, I wouldn't mind sharing my experience.

You probably heard how Jesus was in town today, well I actually invited Him to stay at my house for a while. I figured he could use a break from his travels, rest his well worn feet for a little while. I thought it was the least I could do after what he had done for our brother Lazarus. And so I invited Him in and I thought, you know what, wouldn't it be nice to serve him a meal too; Jesus would appreciate that. But it didn't go so well. It didn't go well because Mary, you know my sister right, she didn't help with any of the preparations. I was trying to get all of this stuff together, I was trying to do something that would please Jesus, but I needed some help with it and guess what she was doing; she was just sitting there. I couldn't believe it. This wasn't just peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, I was trying to make a good meal for Jesus and I had to do it all by myself.

I guess she was trying to be nice to Jesus too, by listening to Him, but in my mind I was thinking, come on Mary, think of what's most important here. Would Jesus rather have a conversation, or a nice meal. You'd think she'd get it, you'd think she'd understand. You'd think I wouldn't have to say anything, but she'd naturally come and help. Jesus was always serving people, Jesus was always giving, he gave to our own family, we could repay Him, we could say thanks. And I'll be honest, maybe part of me was trying to impress Jesus too. I wanted to say thanks, I wanted to do something nice for him, that's all I was trying to do, but maybe I was trying to earn His favor as well, is that's so bad. But I couldn't do all that alone... and Mary just sat there.

Well I let Jesus know about, I voiced my displeasure with her, I even asked Jesus to tell her to help. As I look back, I can't believe I ordered Him around like that, but I did. But I thought I was right. Hospitality was important! And while I didn't say anything about my desire to impress Jesus, maybe I thought that was important too. But here's where I'm overwhelmed today. Here's where I've been walking in a daze today and I thank you that you've allowed me to share my experience. Jesus taught me about what was really important. And I've been going over these words over and over in my mind. Jesus said: *Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*

He didn't say anything further, but I knew what He meant. He meant the conversation was more important. The meal wasn't wrong, but that it kept me away from Jesus was. Jesus didn't need me to do all that work for him, he came to serve, not to be served. And if maybe I was trying to impress Jesus, I realized I didn't need to do that either. He was already impressed with me. He loved me, whether or not I had a meal for Him.

Now I'm not going to give up hospitality and making meals for people or serving in other ways. Jesus did teach those things are important. But I guess what I've come to realize is: I shouldn't serve to earn His favor, but rather I should serve because I already have it. And I'm so thankful that Jesus taught me that lesson today. It will stay with me forever.

Dear friends, the Cedar Springs Ministerial Association invites you to the annual Good Friday Service on April 6th, held this year at The Springs Church starting at 7PM. A dramatization of this very story of Martha, as well as two other biblical characters, will be part of this service where we remember the work that has been DONE for us.