

## New Year's Resolutions – One Priority (Mary)

**Text:** Luke 10:38-42

### **Introduction:**

1. There are several examples in the Word of God of godly individuals who aimed at “one thing” and were blessed as a result.
2. Review of series outline:
  - I. One Passion – Closeness to God (David) (Psalm 27:1-5)
  - II. One Priority – Communion with God (Mary) (Luke 10:38-42)
  - III. One Pursuit – Conformity to God (Paul) (Philippians 3:10-14)
3. In our last lesson we looked at the “one thing” in David’s life – Passion for God (Psalm 27:4). In this lesson, we will study the “one thing” in Mary’s life: One Priority – Communion with God.

Observe firstly...

### **I. Mary's Devotion (Vs. 39)**

#### **A. She was a Worshipper (Vs. 39a)**

1. Mary had the spirit of a worshipper. She drew close to the Lord like few others, surpassing even the disciples in her understanding of the Lord’s coming death (John 12:7)
2. Mary had a spirit of discernment for the opportunities. It appears she was assisting Martha but then dropped everything when Christ arrived. Martha said Mary had “left me to serve alone” (Vs. 40)
3. “at Jesus’ feet” = right in front of the feet of Jesus (RWP)
4. The secret to Mary’s life is found in closeness to the feet of the Lord Jesus. John 12:3 *“Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, **and wiped his feet with her hair:** and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” She kept her head near His feet!*
5. Those who place themselves in a lowly and humble position, will know blessings from Christ few others experience. *“...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.”* (James 4:6)

#### **B. She was a Learner (Vs. 39b)**

1. ‘heard’ = imperfect tense. She went on listening to his talk (RWP)
2. Sitting at one’s feet as Mary did was “the ancient posture of disciples or learners...it means she was a disciple of his; that she listened attentively to his instructions, and was anxious to learn his doctrine.” (Barnes) See also Acts 22:3
3. Mary had a teachable spirit. She seized the opportunity to hear the Word of God from the lips of Christ.
4. How precious is the Word of God to us? Does it get priority in our personal life? Does it get priority in our church life? Do you come regularly to hear the Great Shepherd’s under shepherd who is His vessel to speak the Word to you?

5. Too many Christians sit in front of the T.V. more than they do at the feet of Jesus!
6. "Low at Thy feet Lord Jesus; This is the place for me; There I have learned sweet lessons, Truth that has set me free.

Observe secondly...

## **II. Martha's Distress (Vs. 40)**

### **A. Distraction (Vs. 40a)**

1. 'cumbered' = burdened down (e.g. a cumbersome load or object). Means to be pulled or dragged away, to be distracted, to be drawn about in different directions. She was all "wrapped up" in her activities!
2. There is nothing wrong with serving, so long as our serving does not cause us to lose sight of the Saviour!
3. Serving Christ is right and good, so long as it is an outflow of our time spent at His feet and done in his power and not in the strength and energy of the self-life.
4. We need to pray, "Lord, keep self out of my service for you. May my motives for serving you be produced by the workings of the Holy Spirit in me, and not the impulses of the flesh."
5. Note: The flesh tends to run hot in an atmosphere of busyness and activity. This is why we must take care as we serve together as a church in ministries and the domestic running of the church (e.g. building program).

### **B. Frustration (Vs. 40b)**

1. Frustration at the Lord
  - a. "came to him" = she stepped up to or burst in upon Jesus. An explosive act as with her speech (RWP)
  - b. "dost thou not care" = she accused Christ of being uncaring towards her. Interesting that often the people who are the most vocal about the need for caring are often some of the most rude and unkind!
  - c. Internal tension and unrest eventually leads to outward displays of fleshly anger and frustration.
  - d. Do you ever vent frustration at the Lord when strained or stressed over the "to do" list? E.g. "Lord, why on earth is this happening!"
  - e. Martha seems to have forgotten who she is speaking to! She was trying to get the Lord of the Universe on board with her program rather than submitting to His plan.
2. Frustration at Mary
  - a. Believers who are serving in a carnal fashion, will misunderstand and misrepresent the Spirit-filled Christian.
  - b. Mary would later attract criticism from the disciples (especially Judas) when she anointed Christ's feet with that costly ointment.

You can get in a lot of trouble for simply being close to the Lord Jesus.

- c. When we serve in the wrong spirit, we hurt those closest to us, particularly with our tongues.
- d. Working with carnal Christians is difficult and painful!

Observe thirdly...

### **III. The Master's Discourse (Vs. 41-42)**

Christ's words to Martha contain...

#### **A. A Profound Insight (Vs. 41)**

1. "Martha, Martha" = it is interesting to note how often the Lord does this in Scripture (e.g. Luke 22:31; Acts 9:4). Seems it is to get the person's attention!
2. "careful and troubled" = 'careful' means anxious, worried. 'troubled' was a common word for tumult (RWP) A 'tumult' refers to the commotion, disturbance or agitation of a multitude, usually accompanied with great noise, uproar and confusion of voices. (Webster) She had an agitated state of mind.
  - a. Php 4:6-7 *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*
  - b. "Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear; all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer."
  - c. Psalm 55:22 *"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee:"*
3. "many things" = there was a lot on Martha's mind!

#### **B. A Pointed Instruction (Vs. 42a)**

1. "one thing is needful" = only one thing is necessary! That means all other things are negotiable but this one thing is not.
2. If spending time at the feet of Jesus is the "one needful thing", why is it that we so often cut it short or neglect it for the "many things"? By our actions we tend to relegate it to the "one needless thing"
3. What is your first priority? The "many things" or the "one thing"? Which comes first? Which gets the best of your time?

#### **C. A Precious Illustration (Vs. 42b)**

1. "Mary hath chosen that good part" = Mary reflected the right order of priorities. She made the right choice.
2. "which shall not be taken away from her" = spiritual priorities reap lasting rewards. Time spent with the Lord is not wasted time.

**Conclusion:** What are your priorities for this year? Resolve to have just **one priority**, to sit at the feet of Jesus!