



## March 16 – Faith & Works

It is rampant in our culture. We want things to be either/or – you like Coke or Pepsi. You love the outdoors or the indoors. You either agree with me or you're a bad person. Life isn't all either/or. Mostly it's a lot of "in-betweens" and both/and. How might our faith be different if we lived in the middle instead of this or that? Join us this weekend as we let Mary and Martha, friends of Jesus, help us understand the middle!

### Scripture:

#### James 2:1-4, 14-18 NLT

My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? <sup>2</sup> For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. <sup>3</sup> If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor" —well, <sup>4</sup> doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? <sup>15</sup> Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, <sup>16</sup> and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" —but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? <sup>17</sup> So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. <sup>18</sup> Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds."

#### Luke 10:38-42 The Message

As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand." <sup>41-42</sup> The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her."

### Questions:

- We often want easy answers or ideas. We want things in life to be either/or, and in this week's story making it either/or, sounds like we're either saved by works or by faith. Which do you tend to lean more towards? Doing service or feeding your faith?
- Today's story seems to lift up a faith of works. But what Jesus is trying to help Martha see are the things that are getting in the way of her relationship with Jesus. What things get in your way?
- This week try both seeking Jesus' heart and doing service in his name. How does it feel to focus on both? Which is harder for you?

### Reading for the Week:

**Monday:** Ephesians 2:8-9

**Tuesday:** Philippians 2:3-4

**Wednesday:** 1 Thessalonians 1:3

**Thursday:** James 2:10

**Friday:** Philippians 4:13