

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable to you oh Lord our strength and redeemer. Amen

Luke 10:38-42

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things” Here we have another story from Luke as Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem. The cross awaits him there and this must have weighed heavily on his mind. Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. We forget sometimes that in his humanity he knew he was going to suffer when he reached Jerusalem.

So, he takes comfort in the home of some dear friends in the village of Bethany just outside of Jerusalem. If Martha and her sister Mary had been following Jesus’s teaching, they likely knew something sinister lay ahead for him. He was with a group of people but nothing is said in the scripture about any others entering Martha’s house. While there were many restrictions on what Jewish women could do in those days, they were able to conduct business such as buying and selling property and owning their own home.

And while they had a brother named Lazarus who in John’s Gospel, Jesus will raise from the dead, he is not present at this time. So, Martha welcomes Jesus into her home. But travellers are hungry and Martha is busy preparing food but Mary does not come to assist her, she sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to what he has to say. Martha fusses about in the kitchen, grumbling to herself and maybe even banging the odd pot around. But Mary stays put!

Finally, Martha can’t take it anymore and goes to Jesus to complain. Likely, she interrupts Him and speaks. “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work”. She then takes it upon herself to give Jesus an order!! “Tell her then to help me”. No mention is made of Jesus’ reaction to this. I most likely would take a deep breath may be mutter something under my breath, and role my eyes but Jesus simply says. “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. Your sister has chosen the better part and it will not be taken away from her”.

Worried and distracted by many things! What are our worries and distractions today that keep us from listening to Jesus Christ. In our own lives we may worry about a family member who is seriously ill, a wayward child or grandchild, serious financial issues. Things not to be taken lightly for sure, or we may be stressed by the busy week coming up and how are we going to fit everything in.

Or, how can we escape hearing about all the trouble spots of the world: the drought in Sudan, war in Gaza or Ukraine. BUT in all these things we are told not to worry. Scripture offers us many verses to reflect upon when we are stressed.

Here are just a few.

- Cast your cares upon Him for He cares for you. 1Peter 5:7
- Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28-30
- And the words of Jesus from the wonderful Sermon on the Mount. Read it at home if you have a chance, it is three chapters in Matthew's gospel, 5, 6, and 7, with a whole section on worry, chapter 6: 25-35.

How often we fail to turn our troubles over to Jesus in prayer AND leave them there. This story is not about making Martha the bad person; she had every right to get a meal ready. But, would it have mattered if the meal was an hour or two late. Then she too could have listened to the wonderful words Jesus was sharing with Mary. No doubt words of encouragement and hope as He had done throughout His teaching life.

Seek first God's Kingdom and every thing that is needed will be given to us. It is not by chance that our hymn before the gospel is Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. Take time to pray, or listen, or read your bible, or just gaze out on God's creation and the doors of understanding will be opened for us.

Actions like showing hospitality are good and expected of us as Christians but listening must come first then we can know if the actions we are doing are to bring Glory to God or are actions just for ourselves. Actions come after listening. Mary is listening. Are we?

And we say AMEN.