

After Jesus Left...
Oak Grove Presbyterian Church
Rev. Mary Pol and Rev. Mary Koon
April 3, 2022
Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴² there is need of only one thing.^[a] Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." AMEN

What a sweet story, and so familiar, too! Sometimes I think that Martha gets a bad reputation from this reading. But is that really so? Have you ever wondered what transpired between Mary and her sister, Martha, after Jesus left? What did they talk about? Pastor Mary and I started imagining that conversation and we invite you to imagine along with us.

Martha sees Mary sitting behind the house looking a little dreamy: O there you are, Mary! I've been looking for you, the dishes need to be washed, there's a real mess inside! Did Lazarus and the others leave with Jesus?

Mary: Yes, they're gone. I came out to see them off. I've been sitting here thinking. Just look at the sky, Martha! The stars shine so brightly and there are so many tonight. I was lost in wonder...remembering our ancestor Abraham and God's promises to our people. I can feel those promises come alive in Jesus.

Martha: Okay, yes, sure. Are you going to help me or what?

Mary: Sitting with Jesus tonight, listening to him talk...Martha. I know you needed help, that we had so many hungry mouths to feed. But couldn't it have waited just a bit? For months, I've heard talk at the well in town of Jesus and his healings, his teachings and miracles. I wanted to see for myself. And, Martha, Lazarus himself was with him by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus fed thousands of people there and he didn't complain at all of the work it took!

Martha: Mary, he had help!!! Tell me, sister, what is it about Jesus that draws you in? What do you find so compelling?

Mary: Jesus looks at me, Martha, at women, and sees us as real people. He listens to us. Respects us. He didn't ask me to leave tonight, did he? He wanted me to stay, to learn, to sit with the other me. That just doesn't happen. He speaks of God in a way I've never heard before! Jesus tells stories of wheat and coins and seeds, then it becomes clear that he's not really talking about wheat and coins and seeds, but rather God and God's kingdom. He speaks with authority and conviction that makes me wonder... oh, Martha, could he be the one for whom we've waited? Could he be the Messiah?

Martha: Jesus is making the Pharisees angry, or so I hear. And I've heard that soon they'll be heading to Jerusalem to confront the authorities there. Do you think that will happen?

Mary: I don't know. Jesus speaks of peace and love. I don't think he'll take up a sword, but we don't know what will happen next. You are right, he has made the Pharisees and Sadducees frustrated and angry, and I know he's caught the attention of the Roman authorities. Surely there will be conflict, and possibly fighting. I'm excited and I'm scared. Jesus

has asked me to go with him, to join the others as he journeys around the countryside teaching and sharing his message.

Martha: But what about our home? Could you really see yourself on the road, sleeping outside? Will other women be with you?

Mary: Martha, every fiber of my being tells me that I must follow, I need to listen to this teacher. I cannot do otherwise. Jesus has asked us, his disciples, his students, to share the message of liberation, of freedom, and forgiveness with others. I want to go, Martha, to teach and speak with other women. I want to follow Jesus and see where he leads. It's how I feel most alive! What makes you come alive, Martha? What is it that you can't NOT do?

Martha: I love making a home here, and all that involves. But I know that sometimes I can put aside my long list of tasks. I suppose I didn't need to make the napkins into swans and serve seven courses tonight. Mary, I could use some of your listening skills, for sure, and really, sometimes you can get up off your duff and pitch in to help!

Mary: Truly, Martha, I see that you are needed here. Your gift of hospitality is well known and Jesus himself enjoyed it. He praised you for your warm welcome and the food we ate. That's a gift from God. Your care of this home, of our animals, our land and Lazarus, they are part of God's work, too. Service looks different for each person and Jesus values us all. I am not you, and you are not me, but we each contribute. You are right, I can chip in and help sometimes. But we can love and respect one another knowing that we are serving in the way God wants. We can both live our lives with purpose and meaning.

Martha: Come on, little sister, let's go and get those dishes started.

AMEN