

The Servant



Newsletter for Under-Shepherds and other Servants of God /5523 Newberry Drive/Raleigh, NC 27609

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The purpose of this newsletter is to pass along information and ideas to help the Lord's servants as they minister to others. Feel free to use any of it in your ministry

FIRST

*Mary drank in every word as she sat at Jesus' feet
Martha fumed within her heart as she thought
of bread and meat
One has chosen the better part and from the Master
learned
that life and resurrection and grace cannot be earned*

*To serve and care is needed, the children put to bed
But first things first in worship they must be washed
and fed*

*Mary sat and gazed at Him and loved the Son eternal
Outward beauty was outshined by the one that was
internal
She had meat to eat they knew not of and so her heart
was filled
Just being in His presence, she was happy, she was
thrilled*

*So may I learn from Mary where each happy day
should start
May I bow before my Savior and gather for my heart
The bread that comes from heaven and find in it the
power
I'll need to do the "Martha work" hour after hour.*

One Church

Forget about denominations- there are basically three kinds of churches. There is what I call the Mary Church, the Martha Church, and the Lazarus Church. Believers generally seek out one kind over another.

Some look for the Mary Church which majors on the Message. In the Mary Church people are always sitting with open Bibles. They look forward to the next study. They love to learn, they love to listen.

Others only want the Martha Church where the emphasis is on what they call Ministry. These churches are a flurry and buzz of activity. There are bus ministries, single ministries, Prime-Timers, calling programs, dinners, socials, and social services. Today Mary will probably be found sitting in some large congregation with an open Bible on her lap. Martha, on the other hand, will most likely be found in the Church kitchen in soap suds up to her elbows. The Martha Church is all activity. Those who belong to a Martha Church need their Day-Timer™ as much as their Bible because they live with a full calendar.

Then there are those who look for the Miracles and the Lazarus Church. They won't attend any other kind. They want to see many come forth from the tomb. They want to see souls saved. They want to see the power of God quicken the dead. They are ready to "loose" Lazarus as well as roll the stone away. They look for life and love it.

The Mary Church is the Church before the Word- (It bows before the message)

The Martha Church is the Church before the Work (It bends beneath the ministry)

The Lazarus Church is the Church before the World (It bears witness beside the miracle)

Before we begin an argument about which is the greatest, let me point out that Jesus said he loved them all. They were family. If anything, the church is a family. We are supposed to be relatives not rivals. I'm afraid this is not the way things have been ever since the early church began to quibble, and quarrel with one saying "I am of Paul" and another of Apollos and another of Cephas. We are supposed to "Arise and go to [the same] Father" Lk. 15. It would be wonderful if the Mary types, Martha types and Lazarus types would live together as brothers and sisters under the same roof of faith. The key is not to look for Martha, or for Mary, or for Lazarus, but for Jesus.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them."

Matt. 18:20.

Don't worry about the "two or three" look for Him.



Martha, Martha

When the Lord has to call your name twice you can be sure there is a problem somewhere. This is not God calling the child Samuel. Martha should have known better. She had already met the Master. I can only imagine this “Martha, Martha” was accompanied with a slight shaking of the head in disapproval along with a pained look when spoken by Christ. I’m sure God has shaken his head many times at the sight of my manners and my methods. There have been times when I too called out, like Martha, for “help” (Lk. 10:40) feeling “alone” in the kitchen.

Before we are too hard on Martha we should remember that the Bible says it was “her house.” Many who are quick to criticize her have never opened their house as a place where Christ can teach. We must thank God for her and her many sisters who are given to hospitality. Don’t forget Lydia who first opened her heart, then her home, and then saw God open all of Europe. The Western Church owes a debt of gratitude to this woman who opened her doors and our world to Christ.

Yet many a sister (and brother) stumble on the very same crack in the sidewalk as Martha. No sooner do they invite Christ (Lk. 10:38) into their lives, when next we find them in the church kitchen, or nursery, choir loft, or in the lobby polishing the mirror. They are sitting on this committee or on that, heading the Vacation Bible School, Mother’s day out program, and singing in a trio. They are sewing costumes for the Christmas play, and collecting canned goods for the needy. Not to be out-done by Martha, she chairs the ladies aid or woman’s missionary society, and all too

often is overworked, resentful, busy, exhausted, complaining, sulking, discouraged, overwhelmed crying “help me” (Lk. 10:40). I thought the song says “There is Joy in Serving Jesus.” What went wrong?

The word Jesus used in his gentle rebuke was “cumbered about” which means being “carried away.” Be careful, there is an undertow not far from the shore of Christian service. Just as unsuspecting swimmers are caught up and carried away by the unseen current, many a minister has been carried away with “his” ministry and ended up, if not lost at sea, at least miles down the beach, far from Christ. Martha was more absorbed in her muffins than in the Master. Perhaps she was famous in and around Bethany for her baking (pardon my imagination). Perhaps she had a reputation to protect. But just like Martha, many a preacher has been so concerned about his “message” and “ministry” to the point of becoming “anxious and troubled about many things.” Martha, Martha, it doesn’t have to be that way.

1. Keep the Main thing the Main Thing. The “many things” become a problem only when the main thing is no longer the main thing. Worship must always be first. The main thing is not a thing at all; it is a person. It is Christ.

2. Take His Word (v.39). If you go into the kitchen, take his word with you, and don’t leave home without it. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” His word is more important than any work. Servants must begin the day with getting the Master’s instructions. Remember Peter fishing without Christ? He caught nothing. But Christ’s word made an easy go of it.

3. Listen to yourself. That’s right, listen to you. Do you use foolish words like “my” ministry? Your speech betrays you. Do you find yourself complaining about “church work” or other believers? Do you find yourself criticizing others? Do you feel you are “alone” in the kitchen, and resenting it? If you feel alone, you need to find Him again. Sit at His feet. Be with Him. Worship Him and enjoy the wonder of His presence.

4. Remember, it is His work. His yoke is easy. When it is time to take the yoke, notice there is one place for your neck and another place for one who is greater than any load. Martha did not need Mary to help with the work, “bid her therefore that she help me,” she needed Jesus to empower her.

Obey ye Wind

Obey ye wind
Obey ye wave
Each order that
The Master gave

His word the Storm
Stills and becalms
Like a baby in
Its mother’s arms

The troubled sea
Without complaint
Bows at his feet
Like a watery saint

May I also
His word obey
And bow beneath
His will today



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