



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Luke 10:38-42 ; Luke 11:9-13

I. Background

- “The [story of Mary & Martha] is significant both for where it falls in Luke’s argument & for the example Luke uses to make a point about discipleship. It [falls] in a series of three passages, each of which treats a different key aspect of our relationship to God: how we relate to neighbors (10:25-37), how we view one another & our time with the Lord (10:38-42), & how we engage in dialogue with God (11:1-13). (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, p. 305)
- “The story of Mary & Martha stands in a complimentary relationship with the story of the good Samaritan & gains much of its meaning from the tense relationship between the two stories...The story of the good Samaritan developed the meaning of the command to love one’s neighbor, & the story of Mary & Martha highlights the overriding importance of devotion to the Lord’s Word as an expression of one’s love for God.” (Alan Culpepper, *New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. VIII, Luke, p. 191)
- “Both the Samaritan & Mary, a woman, represent marginalized persons – unlikely heroes. As a composite, they are model disciples: those who hear the word of God & do it. (8:21)” (Alan Culpepper, *Op Cit*, p. 191)
- “The power of these two stories [i.e., the good Samaritan, & Martha & Mary] consists...in Jesus’ choice of characters to illustrate the love of neighbor & the love of God: a Samaritan & a woman. The social codes & boundaries were clear & inflexible; a Samaritan would not be considered a model of neighborliness, & a woman would not sit with men around the feet of a teacher...The conjunction of the stories about the good Samaritan & the female disciple voice Jesus’ protest against the rules & boundaries set by the culture in which he lived...The twin stories also expose the injustice of social barriers that categorize, restrict, & oppress various groups in any society. To love God with all one’s heart & one’s neighbor as oneself meant then & now that one must often reject society’s rules in favor of the codes of the Kingdom – a society without distinctions & boundaries between its members. The rules of that society are just two – to love God & one’s neighbor – but these rules are so radically

different from those of the society in which we live that living by them invariably calls us to disregard all else, break the rules, & follow Jesus' example." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, pp. 192-3)

A. Cultural

- "The public room was where the men would meet; the kitchen, & other quarters unseen by outsiders, belong to the women. Only outside, where little children would play, & in the married bedroom, would male & female mix. For a woman to settle down comfortably among the men was bordering on the scandalous. Who did she think she was? Only a shameless woman would have behaved in such a way. She should go back into the women's quarters where she belonged. This wasn't principally a matter of superiority & inferiority...It was a matter of what was thought of as the appropriate division between the two halves of humanity." (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, p. 97)

B. Shema (Deut. 6:4-5)

II. Martha & Mary

- "The [story of Mary & Martha]...gains its significance from...the tension raised by Mary's lack of aid to Martha. The story can be considered from two angles. One involves the perspective of Martha, who is clearly upset at the lack of help Mary provides in offering Jesus a meal...From the standpoint of Mary emerges the example of someone willing to sit at Jesus' feet & fellowship with him as his disciple. There is something tranquil in what Mary does. Often in the hustle & bustle of life, we need to pause for a moment of reflection before the Lord." (Darrell L. Bock, Op Cit, p. 304)

A. Martha is wrong, but culturally correct

1. Culturally correct

- "Martha's protest is justifiable, but the narrator casts it in a negative light by characterizing Martha as 'distracted' by her work. Earlier, Jesus spoke of the seed that fell among thorns – those who do not receive it because they are preoccupied with 'the cares & riches & pleasure of life' (8:14). Martha's distraction places her in this category. Although she is fulfilling the role assigned to her by society, she allows secondary matters to distract her from hearing the Word of God." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 192)

2. Martha is wrong

- "This passage is also a key discipleship text – not in the comparison between Martha & Mary's tasks, but in how Martha has wrongly judged Mary's inaction & worries too much about what others are doing. The text has two distinct emphases: Martha's consumption with assessing others as she performs what she is called to do, & Mary's wisdom in seeking some time at the feet of Jesus. Both qualities, one negative & the other positive, are at the heart of discipleship." (Darrell L. Bock, Op Cit, p. 305)

- "Jesus' response to Martha forms the climax of this scene. The repetition of her name, 'Martha, Martha,' conveys a mild rebuke or lament...[It is] a reminder that the duty of the love of God & obedience to God's Word take precedence over all other concerns." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 192)

B. Mary is correct, but culturally wrong

1. Culturally wrong – not allowing secondary matters 2 distract us from hearing the word of God

- "The complication appears when we are told that Mary, Martha's sister, is sitting at Jesus' feet (in the place of a disciple – Lk. 8:35) & listening to his word...By sitting at Jesus' feet, Mary is acting like a male. She neglects her duty to assist her sister in the preparation of the meal, & by violating a clear social boundary she is bringing shame upon her house." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, pp. 191-2)

- "The real problem between Martha & Mary wasn't the workload...nor was it that both the sisters were romantically attracted to Jesus & Martha was jealous of Mary's adoring posture...No: the real problem was that Mary was behaving 'as if she were a man.' In that culture,...houses were divided into male 'space' & female 'space,' & male roles & female roles were strictly demarcated as well. Mary had crossed an invisible but very important boundary within the house, & another equally important boundary within the social world." (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, p. 97)

2. Mary is correct

- "The fact that a woman can be portrayed in such a positive light, as one worthy to sit at the

Master's feet, is significant in a first century culture where women were often deemed unworthy of receiving instruction. Grace knows no boundaries of gender. The openness of the Lord to cross gender & social barriers is instructive for us, or often such barriers become obstacles to potential ministry. The Lord was willing to teach all, & so should we. Instruction in the things of the Lord should be open to all." (Darrell L. Bock, Op Cit, p. 305)

- "To sit at the feet of a teacher was a decidedly male role. 'Sitting at someone's feet' doesn't mean (as it might sound to us) a devoted, dog-like adoring posture, as though the teacher were a rockstar or a sports idol. When Saul of Tarsus 'sat at the feet of Gamaliel' (Acts 22:3), he wasn't gazing up adoringly & thinking how wonderful the great rabbi was; he was listening & learning, focusing on the teaching of his master & putting it together in his mind. To sit at someone's feet meant, quite simply, to be their student...[it's] what you did if you wanted to be a rabbi yourself. There is no thought here of learning for learning's sake. Mary has quietly taken her place as a would-be teacher & preacher of the kingdom of God. Jesus affirms her right to do so." (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, pp. 97-8)

C. Order matters

- "The account at the close of this chapter of the visit to the house of Martha & Mary is very full of beauty. In his declaration to Martha, 'one thing is needed,' Jesus was revealing the supreme thing in life. If we would be strong for service in the strength that prevents distraction & unrest, we must know what it is to find time amid all the duties of life to sit at his feet as disciples." (G. Campbell Morgan, An Exposition of the Whole Bible, p. 436)

1. Service isn't the problem – Martha is missing Jesus. Luke clearly portrays Martha as being in the wrong

2. Service is the distraction

D. A word of adjustment about our discipleship

- "[Lk. 10:38-42] is about discipleship...Mary's sitting at the feet of Jesus portrays a person willing to learn from him." (Darrell L. Bock, Op Cit, pp. 305-6)

1. Martha & Mary's story is not about two styles of spirituality

- "We would be wrong to see Martha & Mary as they have so often been seen as models of the 'active' & the 'contemplative' styles of spirituality. Action & contemplation are of course both important. Without the first you would not eat, without the second you wouldn't worship. And no doubt some people are called to one kind of balance between them, & others to another. But we cannot escape the challenge of this passage by turning it into a comment about different types of Christian lifestyle." (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, p. 98)

2. Discerning, not effort is needed as disciples

- "Disciples often need more discrimination, not more vigorous effort. Martha presumes to tell Jesus what he should do; Mary lets Jesus tell her what she should do. By choosing to attend to Jesus' teachings while laying aside everything else, Mary exemplifies what it means to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, & with all your soul, & with all your strength, & with all your mind' (v. 27)." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 192)

3. God is calling female disciples to listen to him & speak what they hear

- "Mary stands for all those women who, when they hear Jesus speaking about the kingdom, know that God is calling them to listen carefully so that they can speak of it too." (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, p. 98)

III. How Do We Sit at Jesus' Feet in Prayer? (Luke 11:1-4)

- "Luke 11:1-13 provides a unit of instruction on prayer. The disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray, but Jesus does not give the disciples magic words to say. Instead, Jesus teaches them about the nature of the one to whom they pray." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 197) – Nature = God's reliability, God's readiness to answer a call, & God's goodness is greater than any earthly father."

- Watching [Jesus] at prayer, his disciples were inspired with a desire to pray, & requested that they be taught. He responded to them in a fourfold statement. First, he gave them a model. Then he revealed the character of God as he contrasted it with that of the [unwilling neighbor]. He then gave them the franchise of prayer in the words, 'Ask, seek, knock;' & finally revealed the ground of

confidence as it existed in the Fatherhood of God.” (G. Campbell Morgan, An Exposition of the Whole Bible, p. 436)

A. Prayer is one of life's great mysteries

- “Prayer is one of life's great mysteries. Most people pray at least sometimes; some people, in many different religious traditions, pray a great deal. At its lowest, praying is shouting into a void on the off chance there may be someone out there listening. At its highest, prayer merges into love, as the presence of God become so real that we pass beyond words & into a sense of his reality, generosity, delight, & grace. For most christians...it takes place somewhere in between those two extremes. To be frank, for many people it is not just a mystery but a puzzle. They know they ought to do it but they aren't quite sure how.” (N. T. Wright, Matthew For Everyone, Part 1, pp. 57-58)

B. The Lord's Prayer

1. A framework

- “What the Lord's Prayer provides,...is a framework...Already by Jesus' day the Jewish patterns of prayer were well established, with short but powerful prayers to be said three times a day. Maybe Jesus intended this prayer to be used like that as well.” (N. T. Wright, Matthew For Everyone, Part 1, p. 58)

- “The ‘Lord's Prayer’ is not just a loosely connected string of petitions. It is a prayer for people who are following Jesus on the kingdom-journey. Jesus...was on the way to accomplish the Exodus in which the long-awaited kingdom of God would become a reality. He had provided bread for the journey, & the breaking of bread was to become the sign of his presence in the church, & the bond between his followers. He was already offering forgiveness, & would accomplish it completely in his death – & he was already demanding from his followers that they imitate the graciousness of their God & forgiving their enemies, let alone each other. And, as we have already seen...he was waging war against the powers of evil, a war that would reach its decisive battle on Calvary. This is a prayer which grows out of the mission of Jesus himself. It is being ideally suited, both as it stands & as a framework for wider praying, for his followers ever since.” (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, p. 100)

2. ‘Father’ (v. 2a)

- “‘Father’ establishes the relationship that makes the rest of the prayer possible.” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 194)

- “The prayer opens with an address of, ‘Father.’ Though this term is not the intimate ‘Daddy’ that some have argued the Aramaic word ‘Abba’ signifies, it does indicate the approach to God as a caring father figure. Disciples are called to childlike trust, not to a shallow childish intimacy. Real intimacy with God is built not on feelings, nor on what the Father can do for me, but on an appreciation of the true nature of the believer's relationship to God. They turn to him for protection & care. Though God is a unique & great figure, he is not unapproachable.” (Darrell L. Bock, Op Cit, p. 308)

- “The idea of God as Father goes right back to the time when Israel was in slavery & needed rescuing. ‘Israel is my son, my firstborn,’ declared God to Pharaoh through Moses & Aaron; ‘so let my people go!’ From then on, to call on God as Father was to invoke the God of the Exodus, the liberating God, the God whose kingdom was coming, bringing bread for the hungry, forgiveness for the sinner, & deliverance from the powers of darkness...” (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, p. 100)

3. The two ‘Your’ petitions (v. 2b)

- “The ‘Your’ petitions establish what it means to revere God as Father...” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 197)

a) Your name be honored as holy

- “To sanctify or make holy is to set apart from the mundane for divine service, or to recognize as being claimed by God. The petition that God's name might be sanctified is double-sided. On the one hand, it is a prayer that God would act to establish God's own sovereignty. On the other hand, it voices the longing for the day when all people will revere God.” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 194)

b) Your kingdom come

- “[‘Your kingdom come’] If God's name is sanctified, then God's sovereignty & dominion will have

been established (Eze. 36:22-23). The preaching of the kingdom of God has been the driving purpose of Jesus ministry (4:43; 6:20; 81; 9:2, 11), & there have been hints of its imminence (9:27; 10:9, 11). Old Testament hopes for the coming of the day of the Lord (Isa. 13:6; Joel 2:1) are therefore recast in the form of a petition that echoes Jesus' announcement of the coming of God." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 194)

4. The three 'Our' petitions (vv. 3-4)

- "...[T]he 'Our' petitions assure that the Father will provide for the physical & spiritual needs of those who worship him." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 197)

a) Give us our daily bread

- "Each day' Luke changes the wording of the prayer at this point by introducing the present tense, which connotes continual giving... The manna given to the Israelites in the wilderness could not be hoarded, so the Israelites had to rely on God's provision each day (Exo. 16:4; Ps. 78:24)." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 194)

b) Forgive us our sins

- "Forgiveness was one of the expected blessings of the day of salvation (Jer. 31:34; Eze. 36:25-32; Isa. 40:2; 55:6-7)... As surely and desperately as we need bread, we need forgiveness." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, pp. 194-5)

- "One who will not forgive cannot receive forgiveness; mercy flows through the same channel, whether being given or received. There is no quid pro quo here; however, the ability to forgive & to be forgiven is part of the same gift. We stand in need not only of daily sustenance but also of continual forgiveness." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 195)

c) Do not bring us into temptation

- **"Would God lead us to either temptation or trial?** James 1:13-14 asserts that God tempts no one. The devil tempts us to sin, not God (Rev. 3:10). On the other hand, there is a strong biblical tradition of God's testing believers: the testing of Abraham (Gen. 22:1), the testing of Job, the righteous one; the testing of the children of Israel in the wilderness (Exo. 15:25; Deut. 8:2); & Gethsemane, the testing of Jesus. In light of this tradition & the threat of persecution, ***the model prayer appeals to God as the one who controls all of life for deliverance from any trials that will threaten either our confession of the 'Your' petitions, or God's provision of our physical & spiritual needs (the 'our' petitions).*** In this sense, the final petition is a climactic one that underscores our relationship to God as a Father to whom we can appeal for protection from any circumstances that might threaten our lives or our relationship to God." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 195)

C. Other spiritual disciplines

IV. The Parable & the Sayings (Lk. 11:5-13)

A. The parable of the neighbor in need (Lk. 11:5-8)

- "The parable of the neighbor in need raises the issue of God's reliability, arguing that if a neighbor will get up in the middle of the night to answer one's need in order to avoid being ashamed, how much more can the one who prays count on God's readiness to answer a call for help." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 197)

1. A Galilean village home

- "The parable assumes the setting of a Galilean Village. Houses were simple structures of one or two rooms. Women baked bread in ovens in common courtyards, & so they would know who might have bread left at the end of the day." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 195)

2. The importance of hospitality

- "Hospitality was such a serious duty that any failure to provide for a guest would bring shame on the host." (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 195)

- "In the sort of house Jesus has in mind, the family would all sleep side by side on the floor, so that if the father got up at midnight the whole family would be woken up... Yet the friend outside has a real problem, & the sleeping friend can & will help him. The laws of hospitality in the ancient Middle East

were strict, & if a traveler arrived needing food & shelter one was under an obligation to provide it. The friend outside knows that the friend inside will understand; he would do the same if the roles were reversed.” (Wright, Op Cit, p. 99)

3. Jesus encourages a kind of holy boldness

- “...Jesus is...encouraging a kind of holy boldness, a sharp knocking on the door, & insistent asking, a search that refuses to give up. That’s what our prayer should be like. This isn’t just a routine or formal praying, going through the motions as a daily or weekly task. There is a battle on, a fight with the powers of darkness, & those who have glimpsed the light are called to struggle in prayer – for peace, for reconciliation, for wisdom, for a thousand things for the world & the church, perhaps a hundred or two for one’s own family, friends & neighbors, & perhaps a dozen or two for oneself. There are, of course, too many things to pray about. That’s why it’s important to be disciplined & regular. If you leave it to the whim of the moment you’ll never be a true intercessor, somebody through whose prayers God’s love is poured out into the world.” (N. T. Wright, Op Cit, p. 100)

4. Refuses a friend’s request would be unimaginable

- “The parable asks whether anyone could imagine a situation in which one would go to a friend in the middle of the night & be told by the neighbor that he could not get up to give his friend the bread the petitioner needed because he & his family were asleep...Would a neighbor turn away a friend in the middle of the night & allow him to be shamed because he would not provide hospitality for a guest? Such a thing would be unimaginable in a Galilean village.” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 196)

5. The demand of honor

- “The response in v. 8 not only drives home the point that the sleeper will answer the petitioner’s request but explains why such a conclusion is obvious. The Greek term ‘anaideia’ means ‘shamelessness’...[of the sleeper] for refusing a neighbor’s request...The situation is unthinkable because honor demanded that a neighbor get up, awaken his whole family if necessary, & supply his neighbor’s need – if not from friendship, then at least to avoid being shamed.” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 196)

B. The sayings: “I say as you...” (Lk. 11:9-13)

- “The ‘sayings’ that follow [the parable of the neighbor in need] encourage confident & persistent prayer in the knowledge that God’s goodness is greater than that of any human father.” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 198)

- “Just as v. 8 taught confidence because of God’s greater goodness, so also verses 9-10 [is to] be understood...as...‘such an appeal to God will work again & again.’ (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 197)

- “The assurances given...assume that the petitioner, seeker, & knocker are seeking God’s Kingdom & are praying in the posture of one who prays the model prayer. To such as these the assurances are given...” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 197)

1. Ask. Seek. Knock.

- “The triple ‘sayings’ in verses 9-10 seem to offer assurance that ours is a God who gives, opens, & allows us to find. Certainly that is true. The danger comes when we take these ‘sayings’ as a blank check on which we can write anything our hearts desire. Jesus assured his followers that God answers prayer, but he did not guarantee that they would receive whatever they requested. The assurances that follow the Lord’s Prayer assume that those who ask, seek, & knock are asking for their need & for God’s will, seeking the kingdom...” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 198)

- “Jesus’ teachings on prayer...require that the one who prays will pray as one aware of desperate self need before God. Jesus’ teachings assure that prayer is effective not because of our cajoling, or because we have found the right words, but because of God’s nature as a Father who loves his own & wants to give to those in need.” (Alan Culpepper, Op Cit, p. 198)

2. Which earthly father would give?

3. How much more would your heavenly Father give?

V. Application

- A. Prayer stations in the prayer room throughout the week
- B. Worship lyrics as contemplative prayer