

Servant's Heart

Luke 10:38-39, 42; John 11:32; 12:1-2

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A. Willingness to be Taught (Luke 10:38-39, 42):

1. Were traveling along -
 - a) This text suggests that the “Jerusalem journey” of Luke 9:51—19:44 was not a direct trip to Jerusalem, but a journey of drawing near to the time for Jesus’ death.^[1]
2. Entered - Christ deliberately, once and for all, decided to go into the city of Bethany.
 - a) *Bethany* - A village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem and the final station on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem.
3. Welcome – Martha reached out to Christ with the mindset to provide Him kindness and hospitality.
 - a) Martha seemed to have been the older sister, who took the responsibility for the household.^[2]
 - b) “Martha gave Him a welcome, and Mary also expressed her devotion in her own way.” These are kind thoughts. “Mary joined in the welcome, and also sat at His feet.” The meal had not yet begun, for Martha is preparing it; and Mary is not sitting at table with Him, but at His feet as His disciple (Acts 22:3). For τοῦ Κυρίου see on 5:17 and 7:13. The verb is class., but the 1 aor. part. is late Greek (*Jos. Ant.* vi. 11, 9). Note the imperf. ἤκουεν: she continued to listen. Comp. 1 Cor. 7:35.^[3]
4. Martha had a sister called – Martha has always had Mary as a sister and interacts with her as such.
5. Was seated - Mary must have already known about Christ because as soon as Christ accepted Martha's invitation, by her posture, she is committed to be His disciple.

- a) “seated herself.” From the custom of sitting *beneath* an instructor, the phrase “sitting at one’s feet” came to mean being a disciple of any one (Ac 22:3).^[4]
 - b) Mary seemed to arrive at the feet of Jesus quickly and seemed deeply engaged in what Jesus was teaching.
 - c) Notice that the whole time Mary is silent.
 - d) It means to sit beside (παρά [*para*]) and πρὸς [*pros*] means right in front of the feet of Jesus.^[5]
6. Lord – It seems like Martha has the same attitude because unlike many people who called Christ rabbi etc. she immediately called Christ Lord. She therefore viewed Him as the One who has all authority and power and He reigns superior over everyone and everything. This is the mindset that consumed her.
 7. Listening to his word – Mary continuously had a willing heart to do whatever Christ was teaching. She was glued to every word that Christ intelligently expressed, willing to come to a clear understanding and apply it. She knew that it was a position for a man and that it made her sister mad, but Mary still persisted to learn from every word Christ spoke.

B. Trusted His Love (John 11:32):

1. When Mary came where Jesus was - Mary, upon hearing that Christ was outside the village, got up and continuously made every effort to get to Him.
2. When Mary came where Jesus was - Despite her pain, it being after three days, and her being hopeless that her brother would rise again, Mary sought to be in the presence of Christ.
3. She saw Him she fell down - When Mary completely recognized who Christ was she immediately worshiped Him seeking His favor. She could have thought, since sickness to Jews was viewed as taking place as a result of sin, that she needed grace and mercy.
4. Saying to Him Lord – Mary repeatedly kept saying Lord, demonstrating that even though she wished He was present when Lazarus was sick, she still respected Him as the One who has all authority and might. She still continuously worshiped Him even when she was not pleased He did not come when she believed she needed Him.

5. If you had been here (I am) - Because of all the miracles she saw Christ perform, she believed that if He had just continuously remained with them Lazarus would not have died.
6. If you had been here (I am) - Even Mary confesses, like her sister Martha, that Christ could have only healed the sick (this demonstrated that even though she was a committed disciple she still needed to grow), unlike Martha, Mary who chose to still humble herself and worship Christ at His feet.

C. Surrendered to Worship Him (John 12:1-3):

1. Passover - The Passover which represents the blood placed on the door post of the slave huts of those who exited Egypt under Moses's leadership was celebrated every year. It brought Jewish travelers from everywhere.
 - a) Jesus had become very popular, especially since He had raised Lazarus from the dead. This is highlighted when He enters Jerusalem and the people spread palm leaves. As a result, the Pharisees wanted to kill Him especially since the high priest prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation.
2. Came to Bethany - Christ made a point, on His way to Jerusalem knowing He was going to die, to stop and spend time with Martha, Mary and Lazarus. His visit was purposeful. It exposed who was truly the thief, who clearly understood and accepted His fate and who (the disciples) heard the message but did not accept it. Christ stopped to say goodbye to His friends.
 - a) Our Lord knew that the Jewish leaders were out to arrest Him and kill Him (John 11:53, 57), but He still returned to Bethany, only two miles from the very citadel of His enemies. Why? So that He might spend a quiet time with His dear friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. True to their personalities, Martha busily served while Mary worshiped at the feet of Jesus (see Luke 10:38-42).
3. Raise Lazarus from the dead - Christ once and for all, in His own power and might, resurrected Lazarus, after four days, from a state where there was no life in him. So there is no mistaking who Mary is worshiping this time, Christ is at a whole new level. Mary goes all out because she can see fully who Christ is.
 - a) Everyone gathered in Lazarus's house because they were in awe of the raising of Lazarus just a few days earlier, and because they believed in Him (11:45), and because they respected His teaching, but Mary had passed all of that, for she wanted to totally be devoted to Jesus.

4. So they made Him supper – From scratch Martha, without complaining about Mary, went back to work putting together a meal for Christ and all His disciples. Christ invited Himself and Martha still served Him.
5. Martha served - Martha not only made the meal (not with our based on our modern structure) she also, without complaining, waited on the tables, like a person in the restaurant because she genuinely wanted to care for their needs.
6. Reclining at the table - It is amazing that Lazarus is not where Mary is - at the feet of Christ. Instead, he is lying on his side at the table with Christ.

a) When Mary came to the feet of Jesus, she took the place of a slave. When she undid her hair (something Jewish women did not do in public), humbled herself and laid her glory at His feet (see 1 Cor. 11:15). Of course, she was misunderstood and criticized; but that is what usually happens when somebody gives his or her best to the Lord.

b) Mary does not mind preparing Christ for His death because she has seen a resurrection after four days. Being a student of Christ, she is hearing Him say in three days that He will rise again.

7. Anointing – Mary’s use of the costly perfume on Jesus’s feet carries many connotations. Travelers wore sandals on dusty rocky roads. This means that their feet could get cuts and bruises. So Mary anointing them, like the man on the road to Jericho, can be healing and soothing to Christ’s feet for the rest of His journey.

Anointing also symbolizes consecration and the preparing of a body for burial since they were in a hot and dry climate and the soil causes them to bury bodies above the ground. It seems like Mary was doing both. She was preparing Jesus for His last days of service, as He heads into Jerusalem, and for His death. We know this because of what Jesus says in verse 7. Mary, a constant student, understood the message that Christ taught and was completely committed to the Lord’s agenda before the other disciples.

a) When you combine all three accounts, you learn that Mary anointed both His head and His feet. It was an act of pure love on her part, for she knew her Lord was about to endure suffering and death. Because she sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to Him speak, she knew what He was going to do. It is significant that Mary of Bethany was not one of the women who went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus (Mark 16:1).

b) It would have required a year’s wages from a common laborer to purchase that ointment. Like David, Mary would not give to the Lord that which cost her

nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Her beautiful act of worship brought a fragrance to the very house in which they were dining, and the blessing of her deed has spread around the world (Matt. 26:13; Mark 14:9). Little did Mary realize that night- that her love for Christ would be a blessing to believers around the world for centuries to come!

- c) Mary worships Christ with an expensive perfume that was probably a years wages. Judas sold Christ for a month's wages, 30 pieces of silver. 30 pieces of silver is the price that Exodus 21:32 set as the indemnity to be paid the owner when his slave is gored to death by someone's ox.
 - d) To untie someone's sandals was a menial task, fit for a slave. Disciples would perform all sorts of services for their rabbis (teachers), but loosening sandals and thongs were expressly excluded (John the Baptist 1:27).
8. Wiped His feet - Mary seems to intend to deepen her commitment to demonstrate her love for Christ by doing the unthinkable. Usually women were frowned upon for taking off their head covering or for being around men when a rabbi taught; but Mary defied both and even went further by using her hair (Paul calls it her glory; 1 Cor. 11:6-15) and wiped Christ's feet with it.
- a) To attend to one's feet was the task of the most lowly slave. Thus Mary's action denoted great humility as well as great devotion. This is emphasized by her using her hair to wipe the feet of Jesus. Be it what may, the use of the hair rather than the employment of a towel, may also indicate something of personal involvement. The act is all the more striking in that a Jewish lady never unbounded her hair in public. That apparently was a mark of loose morals. Mary did not stop to calculate public reaction. Her heart went out to her Lord and she gave expressions of her feelings in this beautiful and touching act (when Jesus appeared for the raising of Lazarus -- Mary fell at His feet 11:32; Luke 10:38-42 she is at Jesus's feet).
 - b) According to Matthew and Mark, she pours it upon his head (Ps. 23:5); according to John, she anointed his feet. There is no conflict, for Matthew and Mark clearly indicate that the ointment was poured over the body of Christ (Matt. 26:12; Mark 14:8). Evidently there was enough for the entire body; head, neck, shoulders, and even for the feet. (Ps. 133:2, but here in John the ointment does not merely flow down, but is actually poured out upon the feet).
9. Filled the room - Mary's worship dominated everything that was taking place in the room. It was as if her worship ties in with the Lord's reference of acceptable worship being a sweet smelling aroma (Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18). Her passionate love

and worship for the Lord overwhelmed everything else that was taking place—even the conversations in the house.

- a) NOTICE THE MARY WORSHIPING JESUS BECAME THE FOCUS OF EVERYONE'S ATTENTION. Not Lazarus, or Martha's food, but Mary's devotion, because everyone could not imagine how someone could waste that much money on Jesus. We must remember that this is after everyone is fascinated by the Raising of Lazarus from the dead.
- b) Mary truly believes in Jesus and that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. SHE SAW ALL HOPE, EVERYTHING AS RESIDENT IN CHRIST (11:32; 12:3; BOTH TIME THAT SHE WAS AT HIS FEET).
- c) There are three things that tell us about Mary's worship to Jesus:
 - HER POSITION – SHE WAS AT HIS FEET.
 - Her sacrifice – she gave her best
 - WHO HER HUMILITY AND SACRIFICE AFFECTED – EVERYONE, SO THAT SHE BECAME THE CENTER OF ATTENTION.

^[1]Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Lk 10:38

^[2]Pfeiffer, Charles F. ; Harrison, Everett Falconer: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary : New Testament*. Chicago : Moody Press, 1962, S. Lk 10:30

[Jos. Josephus.](#)

^[3]Plummer, Alfred: *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*. London : T&T Clark International, 1896, S. 290

^[4]Jamieson, Robert ; Fausset, A. R. ; Fausset, A. R. ; Brown, David ; Brown, David: *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. Lk 10:39

^[5]Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1997, S. Lk 10:39