

TEN MINUTES IN THE BIBLE SERIES

MARTHA'S LIST

Reflection:

Sometimes our desire to serve becomes so consuming that we forget to simply be present.

Martha wasn't wrong to care about hospitality. Her problem was that preparation had become more important than presence.

Mary chose to stop, listen and be present.

Perhaps the question isn't whether we should be Martha or Mary. Perhaps it is whether, like Martha, we sometimes need to put down our lists long enough to notice the moment we have been preparing for.

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MARTHA'S LIST

By J.S. Jacklin

10-minute play inspired by Luke 10: 38-42

Sometimes we're so busy preparing for the moment, we miss the moment itself.

CHARACTERS: (2f)

MARTHA Female (wears tunic with apron - *competent, organized, efficient.*)

MARY Female (wears tunic - *calm, curious, content.*)

SETTING:

In Bethany, a village approximately 2 miles from Jerusalem. The home of sisters Martha and Mary. A chair and a table with a few serving platters.

MARY *is sitting on the floor.* MARTHA ENTERS *vigorously sweeping with a broom.*

MARTHA What are you doing?

MARY Waiting.

MARTHA For what?

MARY Jesus.

MARTHA There's no time for waiting.

MARY Sure there is.

MARTHA There is still much to do before He arrives.

MARY We've been preparing all morning.

MARTHA Yes. That completed my PRE-pre-list.

MARY PRE-pre-list?

MARTHA Yes. My PRE-pre-list. Now we're moving onto my PRE-list.

MARY (Stands.) There is nothing left to PRE-pare. Get it?

MARTHA (Not amused. Pulls out her list and reveals the top part.) Oh really? With that lazy attitude, Jesus will be far from appreciative.

MARY Jesus doesn't care about these things on your list.

MARTHA You *think* He doesn't but... He notices. Thank goodness I made a list, so nothing is overlooked.

MARY What's on *this* list?

MARTHA (Starts reading the scroll.) "Clean floors. Sweep entrance. Make beds."

MARY Nobody is going into the bedrooms.

MARTHA (Suspicious.) You never know. (Back to scroll.) "Fill water jugs. Prepare fruit platters." (Lets the scroll unfold which goes to the floor.) "Fold napkins."

MARY Martha?

MARTHA What?

MARY Your list is a mile long.

MARTHA And your point?

MARY Jesus is visiting for the afternoon, not moving in.

MARTHA And that's the point. This is Jesus we are preparing for. Jesus!

MARY No! The point is, you are missing the purpose of His visit, Martha. (MARY sits back down and is not interested.)

MARTHA I don't think so, Mary. Now, where was I. Oh, right! (Reads scroll.) "Hang greenery above door. Centre piece for table. Light candles." (Notices Mary not paying attention.) Mary? (Pause.) Mary?

MARY What?

MARTHA Are you listening?

MARY I don't need to listen.

MARTHA How will you know what we have left to do, if you don't listen?

MARY You will tell what you want me to do.

MARTHA Aren't you interested in the whole scope of what is to be done in preparation?

MARY Don't need to be. You have it all on your list.

(Pause.)

(MARTHA brings a chair front and centre.)

MARTHA This should work.

MARY (Sits in chair.) I agree. It offers a nice view of the room.

MARTHA That chair is not for you!

MARY (Sarcastically.) Oh? Is this the chair for Jesus?

MARTHA Yes!

MARY I think it might be better over here. (Moves the chair to another position.)

MARTHA You just said it had a nice view of the room from where I placed it.

MARY That's when I thought the chair was for me. (Chuckles.)

MARTHA I don't have time for this, Mary. Put the chair back to where I had it.

MARY Fine! (Moves chair.) This position is closer to the fireplace anyway and will give Jesus a warm and cozy feel.

MARTHA Oh no!

MARY What now?

MARTHA I need to add firewood to my list.

MARY We can ask Lazarus to fetch a couple of logs.

MARTHA And maybe a little pillow for the small of His back.

MARY He can use the one I embroidered last year. You know the one with the olive grove landscape image.

MARTHA Too garish, I think the one I made last week. Simple. Humble. Like Jesus himself.

MARY Simple. Humble. If only you would listen to yourself at times. (Glares at MARTHA and purposefully sits at the foot of the chair.)

MARTHA You can't sit there!