



The story of Mary  
and Martha

Choose  
What's  
Better

# The Punchline

To choose what's better first, choose Jesus  
first

**As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.**

Luke 10: 38-39 NIV

**But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”**

Luke 10: 40 NIV

**“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”**

Luke 10: 41-42 NIV

## The Story

- ❖ Jesus invited into Martha's home
- ❖ Mary sits at Jesus' feet
- ❖ Martha is preparing for Jesus to be there
- ❖ Jesus says "Mary chose what was better"

# Motorcade



# Martha

- ❖ Concerned about Jesus' visit
- ❖ Has an opinion about what Mary should be doing
- ❖ Jesus gently corrects her
- ❖ She's choosing busyness before Jesus



# Cat's in the Cradle

-Harry Chapin

"BAGS TO PACK AND  
BILLS TO PAY. HE  
LEARNED TO WALK  
WHILE I WAS AWAY"

"CAN YOU TEACH ME TO  
THROW?  
I SAID, NOT TODAY I GOT  
A LOT TO DO"

# This is How We “Martha”?

- ❖ Choose tasks before Jesus
  - Don't make tasks a priority and Jesus a luxury
- ❖ Choose expectations before Jesus
  - Can't meet others expectations first and then meet Jesus' expectations
- ❖ Choose comparison before Jesus
  - God doesn't compare us to others

# Mary

- ❖ Sits at Jesus' feet
- ❖ Crossed boundaries to be with Jesus
- ❖ She gets it and belongs with Jesus

# Reverse Sear a Steak??



# This is How We “Mary”?

- ❖ Choose Jesus before expectations
  - Where might you need to deviate from what you’ve done in the past?
- ❖ Choose discipleship before doing
  - Discipleship leads to “doing” better

# Wrap Up

- ❖ We all have choices to make
- ❖ Prioritize when making choices
- ❖ Choose Jesus first to choose what's best first

## Audio file

[Mary and Martha Audio Only.mp3](#)

## Transcript

All right, so there are a variety of reasons we might pick what we're eating on the plate. First, we make a choice to do that, though maybe it's the taste you want the good or the not. So good tasting thing first. Maybe as health. It's like this one supposed to be better for me if I eat it first. What you've been taught, what you've always done anything but you make a choice on what to do first. And we make choices all throughout our day. Right of kind of sometimes between even two things. We choose. Are we going to get up right away in the morning with the alarm? Are we going to hit snooze? Are we going to make coffee and breakfast at home or are we going to the coffee shop on the way to work? We gonna work past quitting time to get things done? Or are we gonna just leave that for tomorrow? Are we going to stay up and binge one more episode of that show, or are we going to bed when we should all of these things. We make choices. On them and inherently a lot of times, there isn't necessarily a right or wrong. But in just about all of them, there might be a better choice, one being better than the other, and that's really what we're gonna learn about today. With Jesus is making a better choice, and he talks about this in the story of Mary and Martha. This isn't a parable. We've been in the parables all summer. If you've been here, this is one of those. This is. Actually a story Jesus was actually with Mary and Martha, but it's also one I feel like could have been a parable because he probably could have taught a great lesson out of it. So we're gonna wrap up kind of our summer time with this story today. And there's a big lesson in it, and there's two women, Mary and Martha, are two kind of main characters, and I think we can relate to both of these women in some way. And what Jesus does here is he teaches about making the better choice, and he's going to will spoil it. His better choice is to be with him first before anything else for anything else. Above him, seek him first. Be with him first. Learn and grow. Be disciplined by him first. So kind of our punchline. Our take away today is this, to choose what's better, first choose Jesus first to choose what's better. First choose Jesus first. We're going to read the passage. It's pretty short, only a few verses, and then we'll kind of break both characters down Mary and Martha and see how we can relate to them, how we can be like them, how we can have the tendency to choose other things before Jesus and how we can also learn to choose Jesus first before other things in our lives. So. Let's look at it. Going to be right up here, if that screen pops off and having some connection issues today, I don't know what's going on, but it'll be up. There also in your Bibles, one of those is bookmarked will be in Luke 10, just verses 38 through 42. If you ever bring your phones or tablets. Totally great to look on those as well. I am in the NIV translation, so let's read this. The story of Mary and Martha Luke 10 starting with verse 38 it says this. As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me. Martha, Martha. The Lord answer you're worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed. Or indeed, only one Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken from her. And there it is right there. That's the story. So let's take a look at kind of what's happening in general here. So with Mary and Martha, Martha opens her home. Their sisters. These two women, we think Martha's probably

the older ones. It's deemed her home. She opens it for Jesus to come in. This is a bigger deal for a woman like this to get to host a teacher. Most of the teachers in this time would have been male. Pretty much all of them. So I've heard it. The host is a big deal. So Martha's opening her home. And Mary's also there. Marriage just goes and just sits at the feet of Jesus, right. She just listens and is with the guest of honor and sitting at the feet in this time was a sign of learning from somebody wanting to be taught be disciplined. There was respect and submission, but also just this want to like sit and listen to a teacher. I think about Joella. Is going to be a 4K this year. Talking about sitting in front of her teachers, you know, crisscross applesauce spoons in the bowl. That's kind of what I remember from this. So she's just sitting there taking it in and all the while. Martha is preparing. For Jesus to be there, taking care of all these preparations, we don't know what they are, but I kind of imagine there's food, making sure things are ready and everybody's comfortable. She's trying to, in essence, be kind of the phrase the Hostess with the mostest. She wants to be great for Jesus here. And I have to imagine she's overwhelmed. She probably needs help not handling it. All right, one person trying to. Take care of all the. So she goes to Jesus, the guest of honor, and asks like, don't you care that my sister Mary's just sitting there, she's doing nothing. Make her help me, right. Like she knows I can't go talk to Mary. Mary, my younger sister's not gonna listen to me. Right. But I'll go above the head. I'll go to the top. So Jesus, make her help me. And what Martha's doing is totally customary. Her role in that society and culture as the woman would have been making the preparations, would have gotten everything ready. She's doing what she. She's supposed to do. But Jesus responds in a great fashion. I always like, put my own voice inflection on Jesus, and I hear him just kind of like looking at Martha and saying Martha, he's gently correcting her in this nice voice you're concerned with so much stuff, but only one thing matters and your sister has chosen what's. Better, and I'm not gonna take that from her. He's saying I'm not gonna make her go help you when she's choosing what's better to just. Be with me sitting at his feet, being with him. Jesus is saying that that is better. Seeking Jesus is always the better choice. So Jesus confirms that Mary is right to do what she's doing and has made the better choice. Now, Martha's choice wasn't inherently wrong. There's nothing wrong with what she's doing, but just wasn't best at the time. So we can have this scenario where there's two different things playing out. We have somebody working really hard and somebody just kind of taking it in. And we can see this play out in our own lives. I found out this week, actually on Thursday. OK, the First Lady of the US was in Madison. And what I didn't know is actually the motorcade apparently came like, right by our house, like 2 houses away. I didn't see it. We were either inside or gone. But my neighbor across the street told me all about it. And he. Said, you know, there's there was, like, they shut down both sides of the road and there were police cars and they came through 1st and then the motorcade. Comes through 1st and then police on motorcycles. It's all this business, but then there's also all these people just kind of taking it in like man, I see the motorcade in. Person right? So you have these two different scenarios. We have some people that needed to be really busy working and some people that were just there kind of taking the whole thing in and that's kind of what's happening in our store. We have one person in Martha who works and works and works, and we have somebody in Mary who's just. Kind of there taking it in. But in our story, what Jesus says is one of them makes the better choice. So we're gonna look at both of them. Kind of see what they do. So let's look at Martha first, Martha. 'S our busy worker. So what she does is again she hosts Jesus and she's very concerned with Jesus having a great visit. She's being incredibly hospitable. She's following cultural guidelines and tradition. She recognizes that Jesus is important, that he's a man of status, that he's awesome, and she wants to honor that. None of this is. You know, right, we can look at this and say she's doing great thing, but it starts to take a turn. When she references Mary, she has an opinion of



what Mary should be doing. Mary should be like me, is what she's saying, right? Mary should be here helping and in a lot of scenarios she might have been right. Mary should have been helping. But Jesus gently corrects her again. He doesn't say she's wrong, he doesn't rebuke her. He doesn't put her down. He just kind of. Sets her back on the right course, saying. Mary chose to seek Jesus first. Martha chose things before Jesus. Martha prepares and wants her home to be awesome for Jesus. Isn't that seeking Jesus first? Isn't that putting Jesus first? I actually think the answer is no. Because she chose tasks, she chose expectations. She chose comparison before Jesus. It's like she's choosing this business and stuff before Jesus. So I was thinking about this. There was a song that came to mind. We're familiar with the song cats in the cradle by Harry Chapin. Kind of bit older song. This was a song that my very first guitar teacher introduced us to. He would play a lot of songs for us and it really he he would talk about how these songs meant something to him and he was one that really inspired, like the connection between life and music for me. So I think about him when I pick up my guitar and I play and he actually passed away this past year. But with the first one he played first was cats in the cradle. And if you're unfamiliar with the song, it's all about this man that has a son. And when he's first born, he doesn't take the time to be with him. There's a line that says, you know, there were bags to pack and bills to pay. He learned to walk blows away, and then the boy grows up and in another verse it says the boy is asking the the dad. Can you teach me to throw? He gets a ball in a glove and the dad says not today. I got a lot to do and eventually the boy is an adult and the dad wants to spend time with him. And he realized his son is now too busy. He realized what was happening or what happened. His son. Became like him. The dad had chosen to do things and be busy before having a relationship with his son. Now the things he chose weren't inherently wrong. Again, he's talking about bills to pay and working and things to do. None of that is wrong, but at the time, the better choice would have been to spend some time with his son. And this is a lot like. Martha, so Jesus needs to show Martha. That maybe she just didn't make the better choice. The best choice. So what we're going to look at is how. Well, we're like this, right? This is how we, Martha, if you don't like the use of a noun is a verb. Too bad because I do it. And that's what we're going to do today. So this is how we, Martha had Ryan laughing about this when I brought it up at the coffee shop because. He loves to. Hate it, but this is how we, Martha. So this is what we do. This is how we kind. Of act like Martha, this is how many of the things we do might not be wrong. But maybe we miss the mark a little bit. We get so busy that we forget our purpose is. Is to live for Jesus, not work for him. Live for Jesus, not work for him. So we choose tasks before Jesus. That's the first one. Martha did all the things to get ready and have a guest and in doing so she actually kind of neglected her guests in Jesus. We are all very busy people. As I look around the. Room, knowing a lot of you. We have busy things going on. I have a Google task list that repopulates every Sunday. I'm going to open my computer later and there it's going to be right. I have all these different things I need to get done. Every week and we're conditioned to get things done. There's a Denzel Washington quote that was also used in a movie that says do what you have to do to do what you want to do. And we talked about this with our kids, right? Get this stuff done. So then you can go play and. Do the fun stuff. There are things we have to do. So we feel obligated and required to do these things and we choose these tasks first. The issue is we can do them before Jesus before seeking Jesus. That's the issue is we put them first like these tasks become the priority and Jesus becomes more like a luxury. But The thing is don't make tasks a priority. Jesus, a luxury make Jesus. The priority right? It's the way it should be, as Jesus should be first, so that's choosing tasks before Jesus. Than choosing expectations before Jesus, Martha did exactly what was expected of her in her time in her culture, in her society. She should have prepared her home. She should have gotten things ready. She wouldn't have been in with Jesus listening to him. She did exactly what she was

supposed to do. But she chose that before Jesus. So think about some things. What do other people expect of you? If we're in this kind of scenario, an event type of scenario? Are you the one that's expected to travel or go to someone? Are you the one that's expected to bring a certain thing? In anything do people expect you to maybe talk a certain way or do certain things or show up at certain events? Are you expected to lead or facilitate or plan? Or what is it? And the temptation can be to choose any of these things over and before Jesus, right? We don't wanna let people down. We want to live up to their expectations. Nobody likes to let other people down. And this is normal. But we can fall into a routine or a desire of just meeting expectations. And when we do this, we actually neglect Jesus's expectations. We can't live up to other people's expectations first and then still expect to totally live up to Jesus's expectations. It doesn't work. Now this doesn't mean you'll never have to do the things you've done in the past or that you're going to fail everybody's expectations. The point is, again, the priority choosing Jesus first. There may be times when we don't meet the expectations of others so that we can meet Jesus, right? So we we can choose tasks before Jesus, we can choose expectations before Jesus. We can also choose comparison before Jesus. That's our third one. Martha's upset at. She's saying she's not helping, Martha's doing all the work, make her help. It's not fair. She is complaining to Jesus, right? Any of us with kids know the kids will do this, complaining about their siblings, not helping with cleaning up adults do this. That coworker of mine doesn't work. Doesn't help. I'm doing all their work. Right. This is why we have crude jokes like coworkers are like. Christmas lights. Half of them don't work, the other half aren't that. Bright, right? It's not exactly nice, but that's we. Feel like we're comparing to other people. Mary and Martha are not doing the same thing. Martha is comparing herself to marry. Her first thought is to someone else, not to Jesus. And it's super easy to get self-righteous with this and be like, well, I'm working. Really hard. They're not. Then we get full of pride. I'm better than they cause I'm working harder than they are. I'm doing this. They should be too. But God doesn't compare us to other people. God's love isn't in relation to how he loves other people. It's just about us. So if God doesn't compare us to other people, why are we comparing ourselves to others? The problem is when we start to compare a lot, we make our decisions based on these. Rather than seeing what Jesus wants from us. Other people become our focus rather than Jesus becoming our focus. The focus on Jesus can lessen. So Martha shows how we can easily choose a variety of things over Jesus. Our tasks, expectations of others, or the world we live in and also comparison. Not always intentional, but it can happen, and what Jesus wants us to do is choose what's better and what's better is always Jesus. And that's what Mary does. So let's take a look. At Mary. So Mary's at home. Jesus also comes to her. Home and she doesn't rush to the kitchen to make the preparation. She doesn't go help Martha. She understands who Jesus is and just goes and is with him. Culture and tradition would say this is an absolute no, no. Women had very little, if any access to any sort of education or even weren't allowed to be with the teachers in the same room. One guy I read said that, you know, kind of the house may have broken into different. And they would n't have commingled. And the 1:00 where they're in, like, Mary shouldn't have been there. So she's basically saying, Nope, I'm going to cross all these expectations and boundaries and everything to be with Jesus. She chose Jesus over all of it. And I have to believe Jesus sees this. He doesn't. Address her. But I have to believe he sees this and notices. And is like she gets it, Mary gets it. He's happier with her being there. Jesus believes Mary belongs there with me. Jesus. Only words are to Martha. Who had a problem with Mary? Like, look at what your sister did. Martha made the better choice. Or married it. Sorry. Mary made the better choice. Mary chose Jesus first, even though it might not have been a popular choice. It was the right choice that went against culture, went against tradition. It might have been. The fact that it went against what a lot of people believed to be right, or to be best. If you were

with us last week, I'd shared a little bit that I make some like healthier choices in eating and one of as I can't eat as much steak and I love steak, so naturally, all week I was thinking about steak, which is totally what happens. And when I cook a steak, I have a way that I've always done it and a way I love to do it. You get it nice and salty, you get a screaming hot grill or pan. And you see it first, you get this nice hard crust on it. So we have always done it the way I like to do. Few weeks ago we visited some friends of ours in St. Paul, MN, the Walshes who some of you know and they were cooking for super awesome. They were making food and one night Naomi says gonna make steak. I'm like, alright, here we go. Let's go. She's like, I'm going to do this thing called the reverse. Sear method I was. Like whoa, it wasn't even. Mean. So you know you like you slow roast the steak in the oven. 1st and then you put it on the Super hot griller pan. I'm like. Time out like this goes against everything I've ever done or thought or believed about cooking a steak, but I'm like, I'll try it. You know, she's very nice to make it, and it was delicious. Naomi cooked a great steak. It was tender. It was juicy. It was cooked well. It was a really good choice. It was a better choice maybe than I would have made, and it went against everything I'd ever done right. I'd never done it that way. So now we need to look at how can we choose Jesus first, even though it might go against some things we've always done. How do we choose Jesus before? Expectations, or before anything else, so we did. This is how we, Martha. Well, now we're at the second part. This is how we marry. So how do we choose Jesus? First we choose Jesus before expectations. And these can be like I said, expectations of others, of culture, of tradition. And this doesn't mean that we're out here letting people down on purpose just for the sake of letting people down. Or they're we're out here being super countercultural just for the sake of it. But there are times when seeking Jesus and choosing him first means to go against what tradition or expectations may say, and this is what Mary did. Right. Women want to be hanging out with the men or with the teacher. They would have been people. Being disciplined, but she chose. Jesus before all that. Romans 12/2 says do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect. Will, when we choose to seek Jesus first, we can better understand what his will is. What do you want? This from us, so think about where is it that maybe you do need to deviate from what you've always done, right? I am incredible creature of habit, loves routine, right? If God's like, you need to deviate from what you've done. My first thought is no, I don't want to do it. But there's still time for. He may have us do that. So what expectations? Is he kind of like maybe these aren't what I have for you, but these are the expectations I do, right? So we choose Jesus before expectations. Sometimes when we do this, choosing our a lot of times to choose Jesus before expectations means to say. Know to things, to know, to working on things, or even helping with things and what I would describe. This is our second one. For here is to choose discipleship. Before doing so, choose discipleship before doing it might mean you say no to doing something because Jesus has something else for you. Now, this isn't, you know, the little kid. I don't want to do that. I don't wanna. I. Don't wanna. I don't wanna. It's not that this is a different this is like, you know, I can't do that right now because Jesus needs me here. And it just helps us get closer to him to grow in him, to learn from him. I've led worship for a long, long time in my life, and I remember I was leading every Sunday for a long time. And when I would be randomly be gone, I'd be visiting my sister or something. I would go to their church and I would be out kind of in the congregation for worship. It took on this whole different level. I connected with God in a different way and could grow because I wasn't a front. I wasn't doing. I was just letting him. Kind of take over and do things in me like so much. And I I loved that time and it was super important so much that the team I was leading. I said I need everybody to take at least one Sunday off a month so that you could just be out there and let God do his thing in your life when you're not up front

because growth is so important. Being disciplined and learning from Jesus. Is important, and the more we're disciplined, the better we can do things right. Discipleship leads to doing and doing better. We're filled with Jesus. We're sensitive to his direction, so we can do things in his way. Do for him. Do for others, but do it best after choosing what's best. Which is him. Right, doing things can be super stressful. Preparing, planning, being present for others. But when we choose Jesus first, we can bring his peace into our lives. The peace that transcends all understanding. That's there for us, will help us. So choose to be disciplined with Jesus first. It doesn't mean you'll never do anything again. Doesn't mean you're just sitting there all the time. But it's discipleship and growing. First, we're coming up on a super busy time of year for many people, right? It's beginning of the school year, whether you work in the schools or you have kids that go to school, or even it's just kind of the the end of summer with Labor Day. It is a busy, busy time. There are 1,000,000 things to do. I feel like this coming week. I have a million things to do. But here is what I'm going to say that I'm going to do, and that is I will choose to be disciplined before doing these things. Doesn't mean they won't get done, but I'm going to choose to be disciplined by Jesus 1st and I will challenge you, ask you, I'll plead with you to do the same thing. Make that choice, choose discipleship before doing. Then let's all do a little bit Better Together, because it starts with the choice of choosing Jesus first. So we all have choices to make. Right. We all have things we'll need to do today. The rest of this week, as we keep going and we can't neglect most of them, but we can prioritize. And the first choice, the priority, the better choice is Jesus first. So want to encourage all of us. I know it's hard, but sometimes to to, to to. Feel like we're putting things on the back burner, but to really prioritize that time with Jesus, first to choose him first and know and believe that you've made the best choice. Let's pray. I thank you for this story and for what you taught here. To Mary and Martha. And I know we we all have tendencies to to be like Martha, to be super busy, to have a lot of stuff going on. God, I pray that all of us would still take the time in the midst of all the business and the craziness and the stuff to make sure we're spending time with you. Just to prioritize, you got to be disciplined and taught and just spend time with you. So I pray that as we wrap up here today, God we go today and and tomorrow and through this week that that would be in our hearts and in our minds. God, that we would just be driven to prioritize our time with you and know that making that choice is definitely the better choice for this in your.