

Heart to Heart

Devotional Thoughts for Women

March 2016

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Good, Better, Best

We are never at a loss for things to do, are we? Especially when it comes to good works. The problem often comes with prioritizing what is good, better and best. There are many times we are busy doing good things, but we fail to see that we may not be doing the best things – the things that God sees as a higher priority.

Mary definitely had her priorities in the proper order. In Luke 10:38-42 when Jesus comes to dine at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, we see a contrast between the sisters. Let's look at what Martha is doing. In verse 38, it is Martha playing the part of hostess as she welcomes Jesus into her home. In verse 40, we see Martha is busy with the serving of food. Mary, on the other hand, was occupying herself with something else. Verse 39 tells us that Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus, *"and heard His word."* She was much more interested in spiritual food than physical food at that moment. Not so with Martha. She was exasperated at her sister for failing to "help in the kitchen" and doing what was *important!* Jesus has to correct Martha's misconception of what is good, better and best. He says to her in verses 41-42, *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part..."*

We get another interesting glimpse into the life of Martha in John chapter 12:1-11 which is the scene of yet another dinner party in which Jesus is present as well as Martha's sister, Mary. In verses 1-2 of John 12 we read, *"Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; **and Martha served**, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him."* She's at it again! Serving food at the meal while her sister Mary was doing something else as usual. But just what was Mary doing on this occasion while Martha served food? In this passage, Mary is serving Jesus as well but not with a platter of food. She is anointing the Lord with her expensive spikenard oil in an act of devotion and worship. Jesus is so pleased with her act of service

that he commends Mary publicly by saying, “*She has done a good work for Me. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the whole world, what this woman did will also be spoken of as a memorial to her.*” (Mark 14:6, 9)

Was Martha doing anything wrong? No! It certainly isn't wrong to extend hospitality or to cook food for others or to serve others in your home or at a church dinner, etc. What Martha was doing was *good*, but what Mary was doing was *best*. Notice what Jesus says to Martha in Luke 10:41-42. He tells Martha that she is distracted with many things while Mary chose the one thing that was needed. We need to make the best choices we can when it comes to serving. There are multitudes of opportunities to do good, but are we always choosing what is best? The early church faced this question in Acts chapter 6 when some widows were being neglected. As complaints were being made to the apostles about it, this was their answer in verse 2, “*It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.*” Was serving widows somehow beneath these men? Absolutely not. They simply knew that if they began to take up the work of serving the widows each day (which was a good work) they would not be able to apply themselves fully to the job of preaching the Word, which is what they were supposed to be doing. Their solution was to appoint others who were able to handle the task of serving the widows so that they could continue on in their own ministry. They had to choose between what was good and what was best.

Another example is found in Matthew 15:21-28 when a Gentile woman approaches Jesus begging him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. She is very persistent and won't leave Jesus alone until she receives the help she is so desperately seeking. In verse 23 we read that her perseverance had annoyed the disciples of Jesus so much that they urged him to send her away. These disciples were missing the point. They thought they and Jesus were busy doing “important work”. They didn't have time to waste on this annoying Gentile woman who was interrupting and distracting them. What they failed to see was that she wasn't a distraction from the work, she *was* the work. Sometimes we need to put aside our personal preferences in serving and look at the work through God's eyes to see what He prefers that we do. It's not always easy to get out of our comfort zone to serve, but just think of Mary walking up to Jesus, anointing him with oil in front of all of those men, facing ridicule and criticism. She could have chosen a more comfortable

mode of service by joining her sister Martha in serving the food, but she didn't. Prioritizing our service and choosing the best, as Mary did, is crucial for effective service. ~Heather Pryor

Ladies Bible Class – March 26th at 9:00 a.m. We are continuing a study on prayer titled “Unto Thee, O Lord.” (Yellow folders) Read and do the March assignments before class. Please bring your Bible and a breakfast item to share.

Ladies Bible Class #2 – We have received a gracious invitation to attend the ladies class at Pinellas Park church of Christ. Class meets each Friday at 1:00 p.m. For more information, call 727-544-8920 or 727-544-6918.

Search the Scriptures

“Servants”

In what ways did each woman serve?

1. Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2) _____

2. Ruth (Ruth 2) _____
3. The Shunammite woman (II Kings 4:8-10) _____

4. Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:3) _____

Answers to Last Month's Quiz “Scripture Matching”

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|---|--------------------|
| <u> c </u> 1. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ...” | a. Leviticus 11:44 |
| <u> e </u> 2. “Fear not for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name.” | b. Colossians 4:6 |
| <u> a </u> 3. “You shall be holy for I am holy.” | c. Romans 1:16 |
| <u> b </u> 4. “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt...” | d. I Peter 3:4 |
| <u> d </u> 5. “the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit...” | e. Isaiah 43:1 |

RECIPE CORNER

"She...provides food for her household." ~Prov. 31:15

This tasty casserole made its appearance at our last ladies Bible class and breakfast. Thanks for the recipe, Beverly!

BEVERLY'S BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

1 lb. sausage, browned and drained (ham or bacon may be substituted)	1 tsp. dry mustard
6 eggs	1 small can mushrooms, drained and diced
2 cups milk	6 slices white bread, cubed
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese	1/4 cup diced green pepper
1/2 tsp. salt	1 (4 oz.) jar diced pimientos, drained

In a large bowl, beat the eggs, then add milk, salt and mustard. Stir in meat, peppers, cheese, mushrooms, pimientos and bread. Mix well. Pour into a greased 9x9 inch baking dish. Bake at 325 degrees for 45-60 minutes or until the knife comes out clean when inserted in the center.

The following delightful cookie made its appearance at our recent Ladies Tea.

LEMON ROSEMARY SHORTBREAD

2 cups all-purpose flour	1 cup butter, room temp.
1/4 tsp. salt	3/4 cup powdered sugar
1 1/2 tsp. lemon zest	1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. minced fresh rosemary	1 tsp. fresh lemon juice

In a small bowl, whisk the flour, salt, lemon zest, and rosemary. Set aside. In a large bowl, cream butter and powdered sugar until smooth and creamy, about 3 minutes. Beat in vanilla extract and lemon juice. Slowly add in flour mixture and mix until just combined. Chill dough for about 1 hour. Roll out dough on lightly floured surface into a 1/4" thick square. Cut into squares or shape of choice with cookie cutter. Bake at 325 degrees on parchment-lined pan for 10-12 minutes.