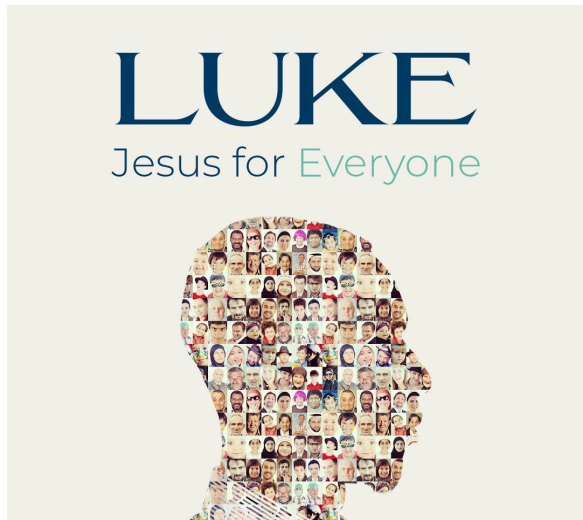


LUKE: JESUS FOR EVERYONE

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Luke 10:38-42

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. Have you read or heard this story before? What were your takeaways, or what did you hear taught about this story?
3. Martha, a 1st century woman, owned her own home. She is a model disciple by welcoming Jesus into her residence. In addition, the Greek text reads literally that Martha was "dragged about by deaconing". In other words, Martha isn't a kitchen busybody; she is a home-owning ministry leader. How might this expand or deepen your understanding of women in the time and ministry of Jesus?
4. What do you imagine about Jesus' tone or posture when he responds, "Martha, Martha..."? Is he shaking his head in rebuke, or is he signaling something else in his voice?
5. Busy 21st-century people know what it is to be

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“dragged about” by life, even when doing important, good, and sacred things.

- a. When have you felt dragged about and troubled by “many things”?
 - b. What helps you when you are feeling “dragged about”? How do you regain your focus and recalibrate your spirit?
6. Another way of translating Mary’s choice is not comparative: it might mean “Mary has chosen a good thing.” Do you think Jesus might be trying to affirm what *both* women are up to, rather than settle for the logic of either/or? Why or why not?
 7. In what ways do you, like Mary, sit attentively at the feet of Jesus and listen to him? In what ways do you, like Martha, hospitably serve the needs of the world?
 8. The wisdom and way of Jesus is for everyone. How can this story, featuring two women, each with their own gifts and callings, help guide the 21st-century church?

SPECIAL NOTE

Dr. Amy Jill Levine has challenged the misconception (often repeated in sermons) that Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus was breaking gender norms. There is ample evidence that rabbis spoke with and taught women. Mary sitting in the posture of a student at the feet of Jesus would not have been surprising or scandalous. (see *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, page 132).