

# Luke 10:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

## Analysis

**Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.** The phrase *en tō poreuesthai autous* (ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι αὐτούς, "as they went") places this event during Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem and crucifixion (9:51). The village is Bethany (John 11:1), about two miles from Jerusalem, home of siblings Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.

The name **Martha** (Μάρθα, from Aramaic מִתְּהָ, "lady" or "mistress") indicates her position as household head—possibly the eldest or a widow managing the family property. The verb *hypedexato* (ὑπεδέξατο, "received") means to welcome as a guest, showing deliberate hospitality. Martha takes initiative, opening her home to Jesus and His disciples—a costly, risky act of devotion requiring substantial food preparation and accommodation for potentially thirteen men.

Martha's hospitality is commendable; Jesus doesn't condemn service but corrects misplaced priorities (vv. 41-42). The contrast between Martha and Mary illustrates the tension between doing and being, between active service and contemplative worship. Both are necessary, but worship must take precedence. This account balances the Good Samaritan parable (vv. 25-37), which emphasized active love. Together they teach: love God supremely (Mary's choice), then serve neighbor actively (the Samaritan's example). Reversed priorities—service without intimate relationship with Christ—lead to burnout, resentment, and joyless religion.

## Historical Context

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First-century Middle Eastern hospitality was sacred duty and cultural expectation. Receiving traveling teachers (rabbis) was considered meritorious, providing opportunity to hear teaching while fulfilling covenant obligations to care for God's servants. Women typically managed household affairs including food preparation, though public teaching of women by rabbis was unusual. Martha's receiving Jesus into her home demonstrated both faith (recognizing Him as worthy teacher) and courage (risking Pharisaic criticism for associating with this controversial rabbi).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Martha's initiative in welcoming Jesus demonstrate genuine faith and devotion despite her later distraction?
2. What does this passage teach about the relationship between active service and contemplative worship in the Christian life?
3. In what ways might our service for Jesus become a distraction from intimacy with Jesus?

## Interlinear Text

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Ἐγένετο δέ Ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι αὐτῆς καὶ αὐτῆς  
it came to pass Now as G3588 went he that he  
G1096 G1161 G1722 G3588 G4198 G846 G2532 G846

εἰσῆλθεν εἰς κώμην τις γυνὴ δέ τις ὄνοματι  
entered into village a certain woman Now a certain named  
G1525 G1519 G2968 G5100 G1135 G1161 G5100 G3686

Μάρθα ὑπεδέξατο αὐτῆς εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς  
Martha received he into G3588 house he  
G3136 G5264 G846 G1519 G3588 G3624 G846

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 16:15** (Parallel theme): And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

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