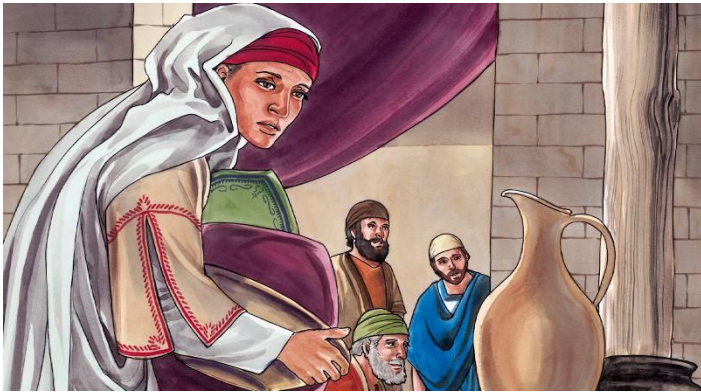


Luke 10,38-42



38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 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!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

How can we humans misunderstand each other again and again? You can see this especially when we expect something from the other person, like on a birthday, for example. You put so much effort into it, searched the internet portals and finally came up with exactly the right result... Well, that was only the case for you. On the day of the birthday, things looked very different. Because then it became clear that exactly the same sweater, phone, etc. was already in the closet. Or you were simply completely wrong in your assessment. Misguided love, I can only say. And a lot of effort with zero result. There is a whole book to be written about this misguided love in the Christian church too. People who are completely for God's cause. People who want for nothing. And yet they are completely wrong. Apparently this misguided love is not a new thing, but has been done like this since Jesus' time. Because from our reading today we get a classic example of how one can go astray in love for the cause of Jesus. We hear the story from the Gospel of Luke about Mary and Martha:

Martha was excited. She heard that Jesus was on his way. And so she planned long in advance to ensure that everything was well prepared. She bought a lot of food and maybe even borrowed dishes from the neighbors because Jesus' visit, as you can imagine, was bigger than any normal visit. This was not only due to Jesus himself, but also to the large crowd of people who constantly followed him. And we haven't even talked about the 12 hungry disciples who were probably starving after a long journey. And so Martha wanted to entertain her distinguished guest with everything she could and make sure that nothing would be missing. It was supposed to be a perfect event. And then the day came. Everything was exactly as expected and perfectly prepared. And yet Martha had to work with all her might from morning to night to make sure everything would work out. She served Jesus at the table. She made sure that the food was prepared and that there was enough for the guests. This is what was expected of every decent landlady of the time. Well, we know how this story continues. Martha found no support from her sister... Or rather, she did not like the fact that her sister was sitting at Jesus' feet and doing nothing but listening to Jesus' words. We must also not forget that at that time it was not allowed for women to

sit at the feet of a rabbi at all. And perhaps Martha's complaint was also a feeling of discomfort that the others also experienced. In any case, Martha complained about it and was reprimanded by Jesus. At least that is how we understand it from afar.

Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good part:

"Mary, you are worried and troubled about many things." This answer from Jesus to Martha has certainly been misunderstood time and again. After all, Jesus is not reprimanding her for making so much effort and work. We must also not in any way conclude from this story that the many practical jobs in the church are inferior or secondary. In the church, too, we rely to a great extent on the practical work of many volunteers who are constantly toiling and making an effort to ensure that the service and everything that goes with it works. We cannot dismiss all of these people with Jesus' statement... "You are making a lot of effort, but you have missed the most important thing!" It would be cruel if we were to simply dismiss the many volunteer and other activities of our church as unimportant. No, Jesus himself had an eye for people's practical worries. One example is the case of the multiplication of the loaves. Jesus does not simply ignore all of Martha's work either. Martha, you have a lot of trouble and hardship...on the one hand, that can be seen as an appreciation. That is why I would like to see this text as a kind of plea for the many voluntary works in our church. They are important and they serve the gospel. It can of course be the case that we overlook the most important things in our work, no matter what it is. Jesus does not want to dismiss Martha's work as unimportant. Nevertheless, he wants to address her busyness, worries and troubles. She works as if there were no God and no Jesus. This worry about everyday life always results in everything else being pushed aside. How quickly I notice this in my own life too. There is so much to do. So much that could still be done. So much that we unfortunately have to leave undone...with all the worries and sleepless nights, you can no longer think of God or say a prayer. I wonder whether there isn't this misguided love among us all. Yes, we are doing everything we can. We also want to work and help in many areas. And yet we have lost our way in one place or another. What we do and create has missed its meaning and purpose because it has displaced the one we actually want to serve. And we are so busy serving Him that we no longer allow Him to serve us. Martha is the mistress of the house and therefore, according to common custom, saw herself as the hostess with responsibility. What she did not understand is that Christ (Kyrios) is the real master of the house. In our worship service, it is always important that we let this Lord Jesus be Lord and listen to his voice. Of course, there are always lots of undertones, noises and disruptive factors. First of all, it is our own thoughts that keep trying to interfere. There are so many contradictions against Jesus and what He means to us from our environment. YES, we have even decided for ourselves what Jesus can and cannot say. That is not really sitting at the feet of Jesus. Sitting at the feet of Jesus means that He speaks first and foremost. We allow his word to work on us and with us. Yes, even when it contradicts us or goes against our wishes. But then there are enough other things that get in the

way. When I go to church, Jesus talks to me. But the schedule, the duties of everyday life and the worries of everyday life hold us in a stranglehold so that we don't hear his voice at all. We have to be very determined: we should recognize what is healing and important, we should also place the urgent appointments and the urgent wishes under the blessed hospitality that Jesus wants to give us.

Only one thing is necessary. Only one thing is important! What we need is very little! And Mary understood this part. Contrary to all the customs and traditions of her time, Mary found her place at Jesus' feet. His words were life and bliss. That is why she put everything else aside for the time being. She ignored the work in the kitchen, the evil looks of the people who found her behavior immoral, even her sister who was annoyingly banging around with the pots. Why? Because she understood that through Jesus and through his words she had received the most important thing! She realized that with Jesus, the most important thing is that you let him give you gifts. And that should not be taken away from Mary. Jesus wants us to spend time with him. And that should not be taken away from us. There are many things that are important, that are necessary, that are urgent; but sometimes it is just important to listen to Jesus. And this time with Jesus is particularly valuable. It is time given. It is time of grace. It is the time when Jesus works on and with us. This is the time when we just sit at his feet and don't have to bring anything with us except that we are there. Our desires and will are always such that they are inadequate and imperfect. Our activism too. But none of this counts before Jesus. Before him and before his feet, only what he wants to give us counts. The gospel comes to bear in our hearts. And his presence comes to bear on us. Jesus wants his person to fill your life. That should not be taken away from you.

And so it can be written again and again on our doorstep and certainly also in our hearts. In our efforts and in our actions, the only thing that matters is that Jesus is there. Nothing and no one can displace him. And that is how it can and should be with us in the church. If Jesus is missing, we only have an empty ritual and a huge amount of work. When we lie at Jesus' feet, we have understood the most necessary thing. And the external ritual can be imperfect a thousand times, the songs sung badly, the building poorly repaired. When Jesus is there, everything is there. That should not be taken away from us. Amen