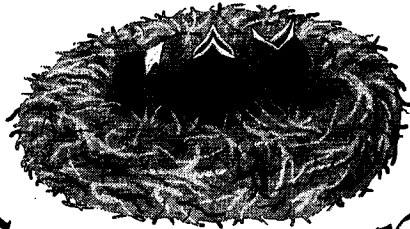


*'They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



AERY NUGGETS

Mary and Martha

Luke 10:38-42

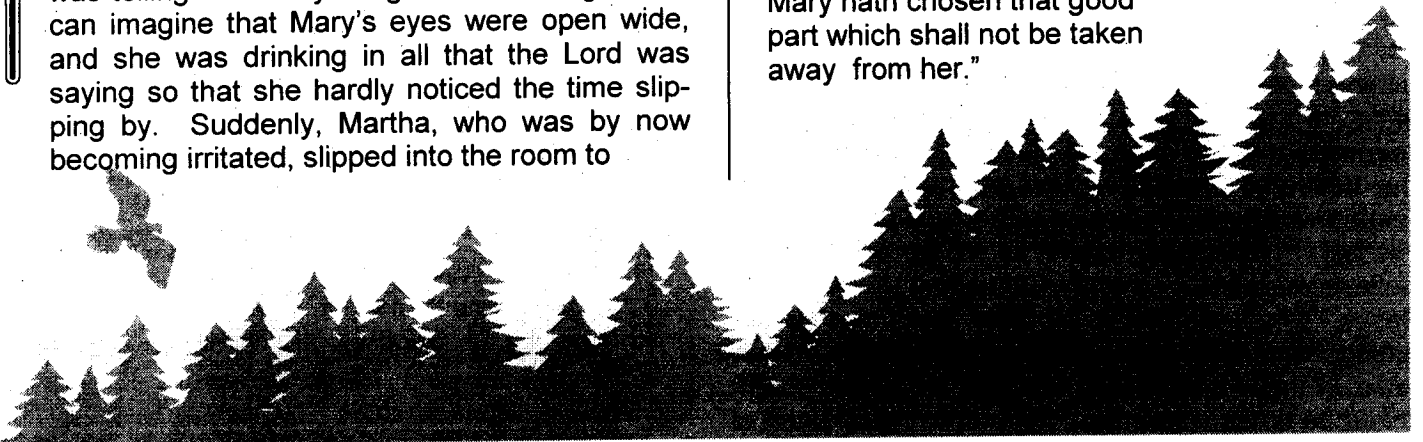
In this portion, we find the Lord Jesus coming to a certain city, to the home of Mary and Martha for dinner. What an important day this appears to have been for Martha! The Lord Jesus Himself was coming, and I expect she wanted everything to be just right for such a guest. I expect the house was all cleaned and put in order, and the food was being watched over and prepared with the utmost attention to detail. I wonder if we can really appreciate exactly what Martha was experiencing on this day—the Lord Jesus was coming, and everything had to be just right—she was doing this for the Lord!

After Martha had welcomed the Lord Jesus into their home, we find her very busy preparing the meal while Mary, in another room, was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to Him. He was telling her many things and teaching her. I can imagine that Mary's eyes were open wide, and she was drinking in all that the Lord was saying so that she hardly noticed the time slipping by. Suddenly, Martha, who was by now becoming irritated, slipped into the room to

appeal to Jesus. We read in verse 40, "But Martha was cumbered about much serving and came to Him and said, Lord dost Thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me."

If you have ever entertained, I'm sure you can appreciate Martha's frustration. It is hard work to entertain, and there are many details to be seen to. And there sat Mary, not helping at all! Along with her frustration, can you detect perhaps a note of self-importance in Martha's words? She was busy serving the Lord, but she was being left to do everything herself!

Well, I know that the Lord loved Martha, and I believe He appreciated her zealous heart to serve. Still, the verse reads that she was "cumbered about much serving." Doesn't that seem like a strange way to speak about service to the Lord? After all, Martha had wanted to serve the Lord—what can be wrong with that? But instead of the rebuke to Mary which Martha was seeking, there was a gentle rebuke to Martha herself in verses 41 and 42: "...Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."



I think I see a very important lesson in this small portion that we might do well to think about. Martha was in a flurry of activity to accomplish the service she felt was needful at this time; but how did Martha determine the service appropriate to this time? Did she ask the Lord Jesus what was needed? I don't believe she did. The Lord had come to her house, and I believe it seemed right to her to prepare something that in her mind would be suitable and fitting for Him. Martha reminds me of so many today who try to serve the Lord in their own ways. The ideas of service come from their own sense of what might be fitting in a given situation, but there may be a lack of prayer or reading of God's word to find out how the Lord Himself would have them to proceed.

Mary was seated quietly at Jesus' feet, seemingly doing nothing of service at all. On the contrary, we find that according to the Lord Jesus, Mary was doing the one thing needful. What was she doing? She was sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning of Him. The Lord referred to this as the "one thing needful" and "the good part which shall not be taken away." It would seem that while service to the Lord is important, occupation with Him is the one thing needful. Our first need is to sit at His feet and learn His will; then we can be equipped to pursue the service He has in mind for us with confidence that we are doing His will.

Have you ever felt frustrated or discouraged when your plan to serve the Lord in a certain way just didn't work out? Perhaps, the opportunity you sought for just never was presented, or your plan was not met with enthusiasm by others; perhaps you experienced an illness or disability, or had family needs at home that prevented you from even leaving your house. At times like that, it can seem as though you are being set aside, and that nothing is left for you but to sit still. Thus the lonely hours are spent, and you may wonder if there is anything at all you will be able to do for the Lord. Such times can try the soul.

Sometimes I wonder if we are like Martha—truly desiring to serve the Lord, but in our own way. Do we remember that true service arises from occupation with the Lord Himself? Do we know that the direction and preparation for service comes from sitting at the feet of our Lord Jesus? God has His purposes and His time for all things. I believe that our desire to serve is valued by the Lord, but our first need is to be occupied with Christ and to know His will. How do we learn His will for our lives? I believe we learn it as Mary did, sitting at the feet of Jesus. When we gather for Bible study, are we not sitting, as it were, at His feet learning of Him? Likewise, in those times when we feel "set aside," might these be times when the Lord is drawing us to sit at

His feet to drink in His Word, learn more of Him, and seek His direction?

We must learn to spend quiet hours in His word, pray for His guidance, and wait patiently on Him to reveal to us His will. When we spend time at His feet and wait on Him for His will, we will be best equipped to recognize His timing and move forward in His power to serve Him. So, we must not be discouraged when it seems the doors for our plans are simply not opening. The Lord wants our service, yes, but according to His will. Let us be occupied with Him, ever sitting at His feet and learning of Him, reading His word, and seeking His mind and His guidance through prayer. Service must begin at the feet of Jesus!

"And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:6)

BRIDE OF THE LAMB

Bride of the Lamb, there is for thee
One only safe retreat;
Where Jesus is, thy heart should be,
Thy home at His dear feet.

When Satan tracks thy lonely way,
There his temptations meet;
In Jesus' presence watch and pray,
Yea, conquer at His feet.

Since thou hast much to learn, e'en tho'
Thou art in Christ complete,
In grace and knowledge seek to grow,
By sitting at His feet.

Thro' tribulation hasten on,
With Christ the cross is sweet;
The little while will soon be gone,
Keep only at His feet.

Bride of the Lamb, forget the past,
Prepare the Lord to greet;
'Tis thine to share His throne, and cast
Thy wreath before His feet.

—Mrs. Thompson

Much love through Christ

Stephen Faulkner

For address correction or free new name addition,

write to:
Leslie L. Winters or Christine Albury