

A needful one among the many

Jesus, Martha, and Mary

Luke 10:38-42

Guiding questions

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- **Many:** How does that one relate to “the many”? Then and now?
- ***Diakonia:*** What insights does Jesus provide into the meaning of “service/ministry” in his time at Martha’s house?

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Three contexts

- Women
- Siblings
- Chapter 10

Context #1: Women

- Women, especially in pairs and groups, driving the narrative in Luke
 - Mary and Elizabeth (1:39-56)
 - Simeon and Anna (2:25-38)
 - Healing and raising: the centurion's servant and the widow's son (7:1-17)
 - The woman who loved much and the failed hospitality of the Pharisee (aka, the sinful woman anointing his feet with her hair, 7:36-50)

Context #1: Women

- Women in pairs and groups, cont'd
 - Jesus' female followers and financial backers (8:1-3)
 - Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him,²as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,³and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided (*diakonia* as verb) for them out of their resources.

Context #2: Sibling disputes

- A face in the crowd wants some money, prompts a parable:
 - “Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.’” Then comes parable of rich fool who builds a bigger barn (12:13 and following)
- A father and two sons (aka, the prodigal son), especially 15:28-29 and the responsible brother seeking fair treatment.
 - “²⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, “Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.”

Context #3: Luke ch. 10

- Good and bad hospitality:
 - Commissioning of the 70 to go out 2 by 2 (10:1-12)
- A lawyer tests Jesus on the central tenets of the Torah and the two great commands: love God and love neighbor:
 - Good Samaritan (10:29-37): “go and do likewise”
 - Mary and Martha (10:38-42): “hear the word”
 - *“Jesus balances the call to compassionate action with affirmation of hearing the word, a privilege and priority for women just as for men.”*

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Luke 4:18-19

- (18) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
for he has anointed me;
To preach good news to the poor he has sent me:
To proclaim for the captives release,
and to the blind sight;
To send forth the oppressed in release;
(19) To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Service/ministry (*diakonia*)

A go-between, a spokesperson, or the act of attending someone (on his or her behalf via messages, household tasks, revelation, errands, priestly and prophetic duties)

Ministries in New Testament described by *diakonia*-derived words often connected to charitable activity, proclaiming the gospel, leadership, and table service.

In Luke-Acts, used 8 times not connected to kitchen duties. (Acts 1:17, 25). Acts 6 is central:

Diakonia: Acts 6:1-4

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in **the daily distribution (*diakonia*) of food.** ²And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, **'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait (*diakonia*) at tables.'** ³Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, ⁴while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to **serving (*diakonia*) the word (*logos*).**'

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Martha, Martha

Simon Simon in Luke 22:31-32: “Simon, Simon, look—Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat; but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.

My God, my God in Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 (Psalm 22:1): “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

– אלוי אלוי למה סבחתני (Aramaic)

– אלי אלי למה עזבתני (Hebrew)

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The (good) portion (Heb: *chēleq*; Greek: *meris*)

- Psalm 73:26: “My flesh and my heart may fail, but **God** is the rock of my heart and **my portion forever.**”
- Psalm 119:57-58: “**The LORD** is **my portion;**
I promise to keep **your words.**
I implore your favor with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your
promise.

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Velázquez (1618)



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