

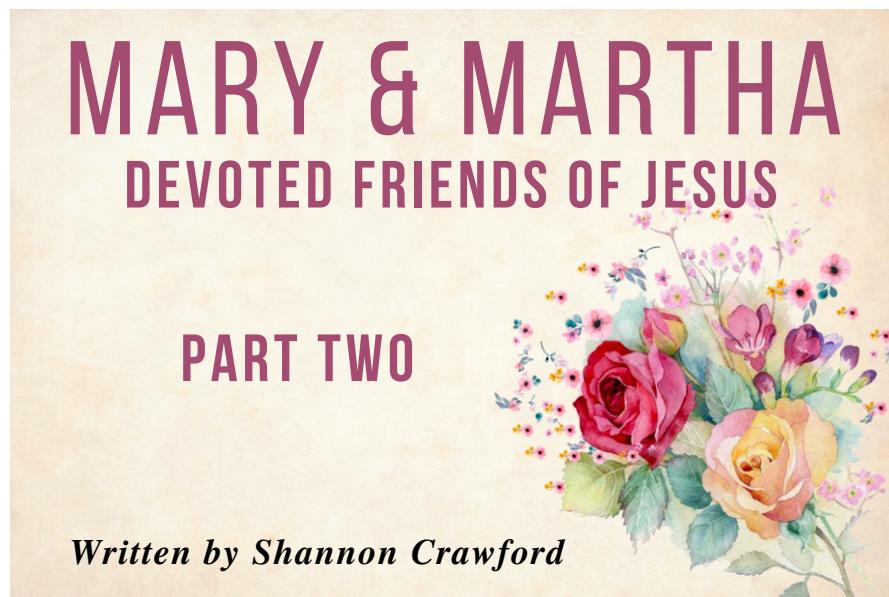
Women & the Bible



A Biblical Guide of Christian Living for Ladies

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The following scripture references are from the New King James version.



Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were close personal friends of our Lord. Toward the end of Jesus' life on earth, He enjoyed spending time with them in their home. Jesus loved this family dearly (**John 11:5**). In this lesson we will discuss the death of Mary and Martha's brother, Lazarus, and how he was raised back to life in John chapter eleven. When Lazarus was ill, the sisters sent a message to Jesus asking Him to come to their home. Even though Jesus loved them very much, once He received the message, He waited to go to Bethany two days later. Why didn't Jesus go right away to attend to the sisters? He already knew that Lazarus would die. Jesus said to His disciples in verse 11, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

The disciples were confused, thinking Lazarus was still alive. At first, they didn't think it was a good idea for Jesus to go back to Judea because certain religious leaders threatened to kill Him just a few days prior. It was to the glory of God that He would be able to bring Lazarus back to life. He told His disciples in verses 14 and 15, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

Martha's response

Once Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. This family was well respected. Many people came to Mary and Martha's house offering their comfort and sympathy. As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet Him while Mary stayed at home.

Throughout the book of John, the inspired writer emphasizes the deity of Christ. Notice the dialogue in verses 21-27. This is a wonderful example of Martha's confession of faith in Jesus.

Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Mary's response

As soon as Martha spoke to Jesus, she went her way and secretly called Mary saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you" (v. 28). Mary hurried to meet Jesus. The Jews, who were in her home, followed Mary thinking she was going to Lazarus' tomb to weep. When Mary went to Jesus, she fell at His feet saying just what Martha had said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (v. 32).

Mary began to cry and the Jews who were with her started to weep. Verse 33 says Jesus “groaned in the spirit and was troubled.” Why was Jesus troubled? The Jews knew that He could do miracles. Some of them wondered why Jesus had not come and helped Lazarus (v. 37). I think the late Kitty Jones Culwell had an interesting explanation.

“When He saw the grief and the sadness at the grave, “Jesus wept.” Not only did He grieve for those He loved, but also because of the unbelief and hardness of heart of some of the people who stood by. Martha and Mary were so opposite in temperaments, yet one in spirit, but Jesus understood and loved them both.”

KITTY JONES CULWELL, SARAH'S DAUGHTERS, PG. 142

To God be the glory!

When Jesus told the people to move the stone, Martha was hesitant because of Lazarus being dead for four days there would be a stench. In verse 40 Jesus asks Martha, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Verses 41 and 42 we read of Jesus praying to God, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.”

By the command of the Lord, Jesus brought Lazarus back to life. Can you imagine what a wonderful reunion this must have been for this family. Because of this great miracle, many people believed in Him and gave glory to God. However, there were others who were mumbling and threatening against the Lord, but Mary and Martha stood firm in their loyalty to Him. This meant so much to Jesus in the dark and lonely hours ahead.

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