

# **Reflection on Sunday 20 July 2025**

## **by Forbes Mutch, Lay Leader of Worship**

### ***Gospel: Luke 10. 38-42***

*Now it happened as they went that Jesus entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."*

*And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

### **Chill out and prioritise**

Martha and Mary. This story is usually used to illustrate the importance of taking the time to talk to God or, in this case, talking to God on Earth, Jesus Christ.

These days, in our fragmented, busy, chaotic, digitally controlled lives, when the world order that we used to believe in seems to have collapsed completely and everyone is fighting each other at an accelerating speed, we need to prioritise our time and peace with God.

Got the message? Good. Well, that's your sermon for today.

Thank you very much.

Seriously, don't you just love that vignette of a story about Martha and Mary? You do love it because you know people exactly like that, don't you?

*"We've got guests coming round tonight! I've done everything, I've done the planning, I've done the shopping and I've done the cooking. And what have you done? You've sat and watched the cricket on tele all day!"*

*"Yes, but it was spiritually inspirational. It was the best Test Match in England since Edgbaston 2005, that's 20 years ago. I needed to watch it to help England win. I was chilling out and watching it with Jesus."*

Doesn't cut the mustard, does it.

But, honestly, Christ does enjoy our enjoyment of sport. Chill out. Enjoy the cricket, enjoy the tennis, enjoy the England Lionesses. It's called stress-free relaxation. And Jesus can sit next to you and watch it with you. He's never far away, you know.

The short but powerful story about two sisters, Martha and Mary resonates with us.

Jesus enters their home, and each sister responds to his presence in different ways. At first glance, Martha seems to be the more responsible one – busy serving, organising, preparing. Mary, on the other hand, is simply sitting at Jesus' feet, listening

to him.

Martha seems to have a legitimate complaint about her sister, but Jesus does something unexpected: he gently rebukes Martha and praises Mary. Why? Is Jesus saying service is bad? Or that hospitality doesn't matter? Not at all. Jesus is inviting us to reflect on our priorities, to cut out the noise in our lives, and to concentrate on what it means to truly be with Him. You might be watching sport on the tele at the same time, but he doesn't mind.

Martha is not doing anything wrong - she's doing what any good host would do. She is welcoming Jesus, preparing food, making sure the home is in order. These are good things. But Martha becomes distracted by all the preparations. She's so busy doing things *for* Jesus that she forgets to spend time *with* him.

How often are we like Martha? Caught up in doing good, meaningful things – serving at church, helping others, meeting deadlines – but missing the presence of Christ in the process? It's not that the tasks are wrong; it's that our focus can become fractured. The danger of distraction is that it doesn't come from bad things, but from too many good things that crowd out the best thing.

In contrast, Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet. In the culture of the time, this was the position of a disciple, a learner, a follower. Mary assumes a posture of listening, learning, and loving. She understands that what Jesus offers is not just wisdom, but life itself.

This is what Jesus means when he says, "Mary has chosen what is better." She isn't being lazy; she is being attentive. While Martha is anxious about many things, Mary is focused on one thing and one thing only – being with Jesus himself.

We live in a world full of noise. Emails, notifications, schedules, text messages, WhatsApp, obligations - and it gets harder and harder to keep up with all the pop-ups and updates and changes to digital platforms which we don't ask for but which people in faraway companies insist we need. But the invitation from Jesus remains the same: *Come, sit, listen. Be still and know that I am God.*

I'm not Microsoft. I'm not Google, I'm not Chat GPT. But I'm me, God. I'm still here.

Notice how Jesus responds to Martha: "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things.*" He doesn't scold her harshly. Instead, He speaks with tenderness. Jesus sees her stress, her burden, her need to be affirmed by the job that she is doing. But he gently redirects her. He invites her into the same peace Mary has found, not by doing more, but by doing less, and focusing on Him.

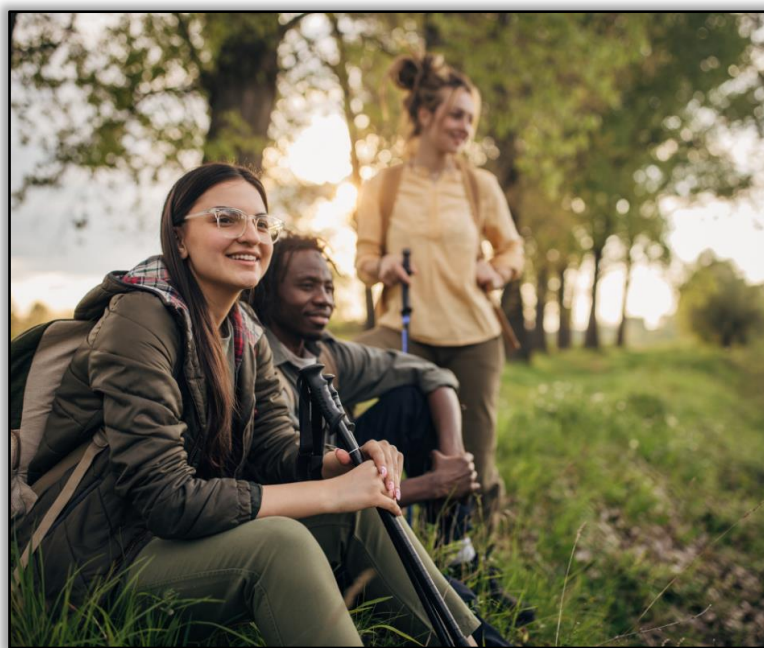
This is a message of grace. Jesus doesn't say that Martha and what she is doing has no value. He's simply saying: *There's something better. You don't have to prove yourself all the time. Just come and rest with me. I love you without all the busyness.*

What about you? Are you distracted like Martha, running yourself ragged trying to please other people? Or are you

choosing like Mary to sit at Jesus' feet occasionally, to receive before you give, to rest before you serve?

You need a balance of both. I think I've said this before but, after I left college, I worked as a hospital porter for a couple of years. I thought I was doing a good thing, helping people. I was working up to 60 hours a week. I was also chairman of a local Amnesty International group. It was all Christian-motivated stuff, but I didn't have time to go to church; I didn't have time to read the Bible. I lost touch with God.

Luckily, God didn't lose touch with me and, years later, I realised that Jesus sometimes invites us to slow down, quiet our souls and choose what is better – the one thing that cannot be taken away from us: his presence.



### **A prayer to close:**

Lord, in a world of many distractions, help us to choose the better option. Teach us to sit at your feet, to listen to your voice, and to rest in your love. May our service for you flow from communion with You. In Jesus name. Amen.