

Sermon Notes for 4/26:

1 Peter 4:8-10—Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

Luke 10:38-42—Now as they went on their way, he [Jesus] entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at Jesus's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her, then, to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, but few things are needed—indeed only one. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

[It would be] "... obvious to any first-century reader, and to many readers in Turkey, the Middle East and many other parts of the world to this day ... that Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet within the male part of the house rather than being kept in the back rooms with the other women. This, I am pretty sure, is what really bothered Martha; no doubt she was cross at being left to do all the work, but the real problem behind that was that Mary had cut clean across one of the most basic social conventions." (N.T. Wright)

"In our Middle Eastern cultural context, Martha is more naturally understood to be upset over the fact that her 'little sister' is seated with the men and has become a disciple of Rabbi Jesus." (Kenneth Bailey)

"The problem with Martha is not her serving, but rather that she is worried and distracted. The word translated 'distracted' in verse 40, *periespato*, has the connotation of being pulled or dragged in different directions. Martha's distraction and worry leave no room for the most important aspect of hospitality—gracious attention to the guest. In fact, she breaks all the rules of hospitality by trying to embarrass her sister in front of her guest, and by asking her guest to intervene in a family dispute. She even goes so far as to accuse Jesus of not caring about her (Lord, do you not care...?)." (Elisabeth Johnson)

The gifts of hospitality and generosity can be seen as Spirit-enabled disruptions of exclusion and scarcity.

Acts 2:43-47—Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number.