



Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. (Luke 10:38)

We learn in John 11:1 and 12:1 that this was Bethany, a village on the slope of the Mount of Olives, less than two miles from Jerusalem.

And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.

"Sitting at the feet" of a teacher was a common way of describing what disciples did in the first century (Luke 8:35; Acts 22:3).

But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (10:40-42)

What did Jesus mean by that? What is the "one thing" that is really necessary? Interestingly, the idea of the LORD as a "chosen portion" shows up throughout the book of Psalms.

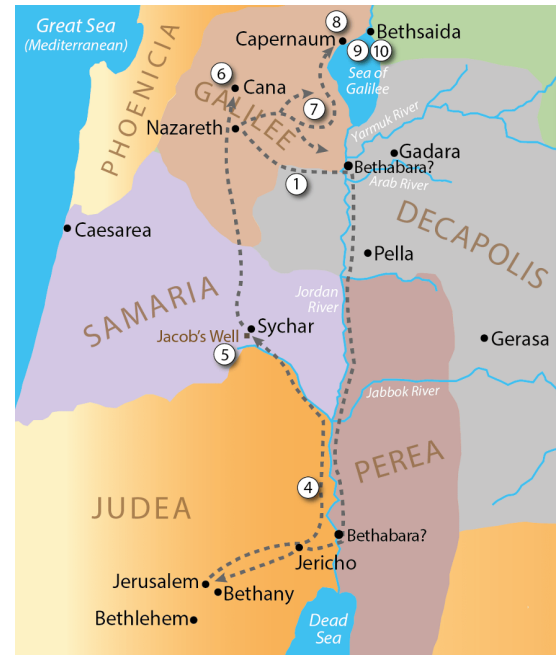
The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot. (16:5)

My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (73:26)

The LORD is my portion;
I promise to keep your words. (119:57)

I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living." (142:5)

So what can we learn from these two sisters and their interaction with Jesus? Let's dig in...





For Class & Family Discussion:

1. What do you think Jesus meant when he told Martha, “one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42)?
2. Many teachers in the first century would not have allowed a woman to sit at their feet, but Jesus often welcomed women to hear his teaching (Matt 14:21) and even travel with him as disciples (Luke 8:1-3). Can we learn anything from that about Jesus and his heart for people, even today?
3. “Martha was distracted” (10:40). Can that be a challenge, even a very real problem for us today? If so, where are the dangers? What should we be on guard against? How can we avoid slipping into the same spot as Martha was on that day in Bethany?
4. This is not the only time we cross paths with Martha and Mary in the Gospels. What do we learn about them from John 11?
5. And what about John 12? Let’s read John 12:1-8 together. Looking back at some of those “chosen portion” verses from the psalms on the front page, how are they a great description of Mary’s heart?
6. So what about us? We want not only to “cross paths” with Jesus, but to walk with him as his disciples. So what should we carry away with us from these two sisters?