

NIV Luke 10:41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

**Opening Prayer:** Lord you alone know what we truly need today and for tomorrow. Help us to make faith based decisions in order to live in your peace and bring your peace to our family, friends and all sinners around us.

**Introduction:** Think again: Why do Christians make bad decisions? "Let me pray on it," is a common phrase I heard as a pastor in Louisiana when it came to decisions in a Christian's life. Many times the people were waiting for a sign from God on what decision to make. Should I visit the Lutheran church? Should I send the kids to the Lutheran VBS? Does prayer help us make good decisions? In our text Martha made a bad decision to miss out on hearing Jesus Words; Mary made a better choice to sit and hear Jesus Words. Did Martha forget to pray about her decision? Did Mary receive a sign from God to sit at Jesus feet and stop preparing the house and meals for Jesus?

### **Lord, help us think again to make faith based decisions.**

- 1) Gut Almighty?
- 2) "Acknowledge" Jesus
- 3) Enduring > Temporary

#### 1) Gut Almighty?

NIV Jeremiah 17:7 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. 8 He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." 9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

NIV Luke 10:40 But Martha was **distracted** by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "**Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!**"

Fear—the amygdale-driven response to threat—is literally paralyzing. Recent neuroimaging studies suggest that when the brain is firing down below with hot, scurrying emotions, the prefrontal cortex—the seat of top-down "executive control"—becomes consumed with managing the anxiety. So much brain power is going to manage those strong feelings that there is a shortage of amps to explore other options and make better decisions.

What do you think was the gut reaction of Martha when she realized Jesus Christ was coming to spend the night at her home? Fear? Worry? Guilt? Nervous? Anxious? Her brain was firing on all cylinders just to keep up with her Fear management. Jesus can't have dirty sheets on his bed. Jesus can't have a normal meal. Jesus can't stay in a home with dust bunnies. Jesus can't use a dirty bathroom and on and on. Her gut burdened her with all these concerns, worries, and distractions. She trusted in Gut Almighty and made a series of bad decisions that led to finally lashing out in anger toward her sister Mary and maybe a hint of disrespect toward Jesus.

The Psychologists explain it in terms of brain scans and brain activity as Christians we know the truth is much deeper than the amygdale. The sinful mind is tainted. The sinful heart is corrupted. The sinful heart and mind are not to be trusted. Our gut does not lean toward making good decisions, let alone please the one and only God Almighty. Solomon reminds us:

NIV Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

The natural inclinations of our heart are sinful and lean away from God. If we trust in Gut Almighty we will continue to make bad decisions that carry us away from God's Will, God's Plan and God's blessings. That's why the apostle Paul, John and Peter all encourage and plead with their fellow kingdom fighters to wage war against the sinful nature and its desires. The more we trust in Gut Almighty and walk in sin the harder it is to walk in the light – make faith based decisions. Call it a slippery slope that once you start to slip down hill, the downward slide gains momentum, like a runaway train.

NIV 1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

How do we keep from living too much like Martha and start living more like Mary? How do we think again to make faith based decisions?

## 2) “Acknowledge” Jesus

NIV Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; **6 in all your ways acknowledge him**, and he will make your paths straight.

Luke 10 She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

The first words Mary speaks in our text today are a dead give away that she had made a bad decision based on Gut Almighty. Look at all the first person pronouns in her words! I counted 4 MEs. On top of that she appears to be angry with both her sister and even Jesus for not acknowledging her heavy workload!

I'm sure Mary and Martha being sisters had many similarities; maybe hair color, facial features, and surely their love for Jesus, as they both were believers that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. The difference is that in this decision to either sit at Jesus' feet and hear his word, or serve him comes down to one thing – acknowledge Jesus.

The word “Acknowledge” is a combination of according and knowledge. Thinking, speaking and acting according to the knowledge about someone or something is usually smart. Martha acknowledged herself. Her goal was focused on what her gut told her to do – what does she need to do? How can she keep the fear at bay? How can she give Jesus a good meal? How can she give Jesus a good nights rest? How can she serve Jesus? But as we already remembered, “Me” is not trustworthy. We are unreliable. The Lord asks us to acknowledge him in all our ways of thinking, speaking, feeling and acting. What does our knowledge about Jesus Christ tell us? And then we must ask the question, “do we believe it?” Mary did. She was at peace. There was no sign of fear, guilt worry burden, or anxious moments. She acknowledges Jesus and what He wanted. She trusted in Jesus' plan, Jesus' priority for her. She mad a faith based decision to sit and relax to Jesus' Word. Mary acknowledged Jesus. She made a decision based on what Jesus wanted for her instead of she wanted for Jesus.

How difficult that is for us to do on a regular basis! Acknowledge him in all our ways. Our gut tells us not to trust His Word, not to trust His Plan, not to trust His commands. Our sinful nature whispers in our ear, “If you don't watch out for yourself, no one will. No one cares whether you are happy or not. Do what makes you happy.”

The other side there is a different voice – the voice of Jesus Christ. He whispers in our ear His loving words, “I have loved you with an everlasting love. Cast all your cares on me, because I care for you. Never will I leave you or forsake you. You are mine. I have called you by name. No one can snatch you out of my hands. Nothing will separate you from my love.” The more we walk in the light of Jesus' Words of love and truth the stronger our faith becomes in His voice over Gut Almighty.

So why did Martha listen to Gut Almighty instead of acknowledging Jesus? She was caught on a slippery slope sliding away from Jesus love distracted by her own heart and mind. So how do we keep from sliding down that slope away from Jesus love?

## 3) Enduring > Temporary

NIV Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy

the pleasures of sin for a short time. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

NIV Luke 10:42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Northwestern University psychologists have discovered that unhappy people perform about 20 percent worse than happy people on insight tests. Stepping away from a thorny problem, or slightly shifting your perspective on it, is often all it takes for solutions to mental logjams to spring to mind. Brain scans suggest that as we relax, our prefrontal cortices—which had been narrowly fixated on the problem—also relax, widening focus and making us receptive to alternative ideas. “Being in a bad mood takes a lot of energy. When you’re in a good mood, it frees up resources so you can come up with new ideas,” And that is coming from unbelievers who have only this temporary world to be happy with for 70-90 years. AS Christians we have a sure and certain hope of a better world - a better life - a better place - Heaven. Because of Jesus Christ, life, death and resurrection, you and I have a place in heaven with our name on it. There is where we want to be. There is where our eyes are focused. There is where we strive to reach. It just simply is better.

All the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 from Noah, Abraham and Moses all knew of this better place they were going too because of God’s love and forgiveness. That changed their decisions on earth. They made faith based decisions because the enduring home and blessings are better than the temporary shelter and blessings. Jesus does not scold Martha for cleaning her house, preparing a meal and wanting to serve Jesus in that way. He does say though that Mary has chosen better! Better because the Word of Jesus is the most important thing we can be involved in on earth. Better because the Word of God creates faith in a human heart, repairs the broken relationship with God Almighty and unlocks heaven’s door. Hearing the Word of God is better! Enduring is greater than temporary – always!

It’s so very difficult for sinners to do that though. We all understand that eating that second burger is not good for our health in the long run. But how often don’t we just overindulge. The smoker knows that it’s bad for his health to smoke too much. The overweight person knows it’s bad to eat too much. We all know that the temporary benefits do not come close to the long lasting consequences. Yet we overindulge. We need a break. We need to recharge our spiritual strength in order to be able to make truly wise decisions – faith based decisions. We need to have Jesus teach us – fill us with his strength. We need to hear the Word of Jesus often. One thing is needed – the living and enduring Word of God. His is the only Word that stands the test of time from generation to generation. His Word still rings true just as it did before cell phones, cars and computers. Jesus Christ is the Savior for sinners, sacrificed for sins and exalted as the Son of God. Make a faith based decision this week to unwind and relax with Jesus. Hear his Word in your home this week. Dust off the family Bible and read the story of Creation in Genesis and see where the Lord takes you from there – the fall into sin, the Promised One to crush the serpents head, the promise in the Rainbow, Noah and the Flood, the promised Rainbow, the promised land, the promised Messiah. Lord help us think again to make faith based decisions. Help us to acknowledge you in all things and remember the enduring Word is better than the temporary world.