



Parkway Fellowship

MOTHER'S DAY • LOVING FROM FREEDOM, NOT FEAR • JOHN 11:17-44; LUKE 10:38-42 •
5/10/2020

MAIN POINT

I can live and love from a place of fear, or I can live and love in freedom.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you were growing up, what is something you were afraid of?

Looking back, what are likely some fears your mom probably had as she parented you?

Would you say that fear is mostly an internal struggle, or does it typically impact a person's behavior? Explain.

We were reminded in this week's message from Isaiah 49:15-16 that even in our greatest fears and disappointments, God loves us and never forgets us. This is a key understanding for anyone who wants to live and love from a place of freedom instead of fear. Today, we'll dig into a couple of passages about two sisters whose approaches to relationship with Jesus were very different. The takeaway from their stories isn't about that we all have different personality types; rather, it is that in every personality type, we can choose to live and love from a place of fear, or we can live and love in the freedom God desires us to.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 11:17-44.

Do you think Martha's first words to Jesus conveyed disappointment, criticism, or recognition of fact? How did Martha misunderstand Jesus' response?

Why do you think Jesus asked Martha to believe in Him before He gave her a miraculous physical reason to believe? In what fearful situation do you need to believe in Jesus right now?

What does Jesus' reaction to Mary reveal about the heart of God?

The family in this story had become very near and dear to Jesus, and these sisters were some of Jesus' most committed followers. Even though we know that eventually God is going to make all things right, it often doesn't help us in the moment of pain. In the moment of pain, good and right theological statements can often feel like trite cliches. Jesus knows better than any of us just how broken the world is. When He is confronted with the suffering of the world, He isn't passive; He's angry. In fact, Jesus feels the pain of a broken world more deeply than we do. He shared the sorrow and grief with these women and comforted them in the midst of tragedy.

Where do you, like Martha, struggle with wanting to maintain control?

How has the trap of control impacted your response to the circumstances of life?

How has the trap of control impacted your response to God in those circumstances?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 10:38-42.

What are some positive things we can glean about Martha from these two verses?

Why do you think she welcomed Jesus into her home?

Can you name a time in your life when you began to do something for the right reasons, but soon got overwhelmed and/or fearful? Considering that we can all start out with the best of intentions and still fail miserably, what are some steps we can take to avoid it?

Why do you think Martha asked Jesus if He cared? Who do you think Martha was truly most upset with, Jesus, Mary, or herself?

Comparison led to Martha's aggravation. First, she spoke harshly to her own guest. A guest she invited herself: "Lord, don't You care...?" Second, she became angry with her sister, even referring to Mary as if she wasn't in the room. Comparison holds us captive and can easily cause us to ruin our relationships with others.

What was "the right choice" that Mary made? Why did Jesus defend Mary?

**What were the “many things” Martha might have been “worried and upset about”?
How could she have handled the situation better? What was Martha’s error?**

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Reread John 11:20 and Luke 10:39. In this week's message, we learned two things Mary did to avoid the traps of control and comparison: wait on the Lord and listen to Jesus more than anyone else. Which of these two points of application stand out to you the most personally right now? Explain.

In what area of your life currently do you need to sit and wait on the Lord?

When is a good time for you to listen to Jesus? Do you have that time? If not, how can you make that time in your life?

How do you want to be remembered?

PRAYER

Thank God for the women in your life who act as spiritual mothers to others. Ask that He would bless, empower, and encourage them to be the women He has called them to be. Thank Him for the gift of women and mothers and ask Him to help them see their task as a calling from God. Pray that in these days God would help you live and love in freedom, not fear.

COMMENTARY

| LUKE 10:38-42

10:38. John 11:1 and 12:1-3 locate Mary and Martha in Bethany. Luke simply placed them in a village. Location was not important for him. Response to Jesus is. Martha responded in the typical homeowner’s way: fulfilling the social obligations.

10:39. Sister Mary responded in a different way. The rabbis had taught people to listen to wise men or teachers but not to talk much with women. Jesus, the wisest of men, welcomed Mary to his audience of learners.

10:40. Social obligations finally got the best of Martha, especially when her sister proved to be of no help. Rather than inviting her sister to help, Martha went straight to Jesus for authority to force her sister to work.

10:41-42. For once a person in need did not receive Christ's blessing. The need was out of focus and misplaced. Martha was too stressed out about earthly things. Her life was out of focus, dedicated to fulfilling the world's expectations rather than Jesus'. Life has one essential need: to hear and obey the Word of God (see 8:18-20). Mary made the right choice. Jesus would not take away from her the blessing and opportunity. At the crossroads of decision making, Martha had opted for worldly expectation and social obligation; Mary, for hearing Christ's Word. Martha needed to change her priorities. When the Word is taught, listen. All else is secondary.

| JOHN 11:17-44

One of the most moving scenes in the life of Jesus is the death of Lazarus. Here we see not only the power of Jesus to raise the dead, but the emotions of Jesus moved by the grief of those around Him. Martha's faith is evident as she approached Jesus, four days after the death of Lazarus, and professed belief that He could save her dead brother. When Mary came as well and Jesus saw her grief and the grief of those with her, he was "deeply moved in spirit and troubled." Scripture then tells us that Jesus wept.

What could testify more to the divine nature of Jesus than to exhibit the power needed to raise someone from the dead? Wishing to teach an important truth about how God hears and answers the prayer of belief, Jesus prayed aloud. Note that the raising of Lazarus serves as something of a foreshadowing of the power to resurrect all believers one day to fellowship and eternal life in Christ. Unlike Lazarus, who was raised only to die again, Christians will be raised to eternal life.