

Today we are celebrating Lazarus, Mary and Martha, a famous family who feature in the Gospels of Luke and John. In John chapter 11 Lazarus, Jesus' friend, has died and Jesus raises him to life turning the depths of grief of Mary and Martha into the heights of joy. In Luke, Martha invites Jesus into their home and while she is busy making scones and checking that there is still some Rhodda's clotted cream in the fridge (in a manner of speaking), Mary listens with rapt attention to Jesus. Cross words ensue, but Jesus gently upbraids Martha for her busy-ness and commends Mary for choosing the "one needful thing". (Luke 8.38-42).

I guess most of us can identify with Martha or Mary - those who can't sit still and those who can't get up!! Of course there are tasks that have to be completed, but if we are so caught up with this "daily round, this common task", we can all too easily miss what Jesus is trying to say to us. If we are to keep both body *and* soul together, we must find the time - make the time - create the space in our lives so that we can just sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to his teaching. After all, there is no better teaching in the entire world to pay heed to. And we can turn to that teaching preserved as it is in the pages of the Gospels. By setting time apart in a conscious and intentional way, we are allowing ourselves to be moulded and shaped by the master potter into vessels that are fit for Kingdom use.

We are not privy to the conversation between Jesus and Mary, but that doesn't matter. We have enough material in the Gospels to last several lifetimes! The Gospels are like an inexhaustible gold mine from which we can take unlimited treasure for our souls. It was not immodest of Jesus to say that Mary had chosen the better thing by leaving Martha to slave over a hot Aga (or first century equivalent), it was a simple statement of fact.

In these days of anxiety and fear for the future, let us decide to pay close attention to Jesus' words, which are a rich source of light and life. Everything else will then take its proper and rightful place.

The Collect for the day:

God our Father,  
whose Son enjoyed the love of his friends,  
Mary, Martha and Lazarus,  
in learning, argument and hospitality:  
may we so rejoice in your love  
that the world may come to know  
the depths of your wisdom, the wonder of your compassion,  
and your power to bring life out of death;

through the merits of Jesus Christ,  
our friend and brother,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

A thoughtful, rather than funny, quote:

"The trouble with some of us is that we have been inoculated with small doses of Christianity which keep us from catching the real thing."

Leslie Weatherhead.

May the God of peace be with you.

With my love and prayers

Simon