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Learning to Love

U.K.

from Precious Seed

There is no more beautiful character in the whole of Scripture than Mary of Bethany. Her simplicity has great charm, her sincerity is beyond question, her silence is most eloquent. Luke's portrait shows her sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His word. John reveals her to us pouring out her box of costly ointment at the Saviour's feet. In both cases a commendation from Jesus is given. He made sure that we should know that both attitude and action were worthy of Him. Others may criticize, but the Master commends.

Mary listened to His word. What she heard profoundly affected her life. In listening she learned to love. Let us consider more closely these two virtues, listening and loving.

"Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word," Luke 10:39. While Martha was bustling around, "cumbered about much serving," Mary has chosen a better part, that one thing needful that stirred her heart and enriched her life. Let us not be hard on Martha. Such motivations to serve are too rare today for us to criticize her. In both instances she was active for Him, wanting to share her home. But Mary's priorities were different. Her open ear unlocked for her treasures of His love, which inspired her devotion to respond. In listening we learn. It is a slow process, but vitally necessary. It is a humbling process, for by it we tap the resources of His

fullness. And above all, in His desire for our well-being, it is that good part that shall not be taken away, v.42.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment...very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus," John 12:3.

This is most significant. Let us consider the setting of it. They made Him a supper; Martha served; Lazarus sat at the table; but quietly and unobtrusively, Mary performed her act of love. Just a few words sum up the positions of Martha and Lazarus, although he had been raised from the grave. But Mary's action brings the whole scene alive. "Then took Mary...." The ointment was very costly. The container was broken, the contents poured out at His feet. The Savior was anointed and the whole house filled with the fragrance of the deed. Can we not say that only one who had learned the worth of Jesus, could show such love and devotion? It was symbolic of the outpouring of her very heart. "Waste," some said; our Lord's reaction proved that this was worship to Him, under the very shadow of the cross. The lessons are not hard to learn. We must spend time listening, learning, before our response of love will flow out spontaneously and acceptably to our Lord.

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The church has no greater need today than to fall in love with Jesus all over again.

Vance Havner