

Printed Sermon for distribution July 20, 2025.

“Welcoming Jesus into Your House”

Luke 10:38-42

Dear Friends in Christ,

What would it be like if Jesus were conducting His visible ministry today among us here in New Minden and Covington? If we had the opportunity, would we invite Jesus to come into our homes? When He came knocking at the door, what would you say to Him? Do you really want Jesus in your house? Do you want Him in the living room, in the kitchen, in the bedroom? Do you really want Him to hear the things that are spoken in your house? Do you want Jesus looking over your shoulder when you pay the bills or read your favorite magazines or when you go online? Do you want to invite Jesus to sit down with you and watch the TV shows that you watch? Maybe be it would just be better if Jesus stayed on the front porch and said a few words of blessing! Maybe just a short visit would be nice and then, with a great sigh of relief, we could send Him on to someone else’s home!

The text says that Martha “welcomed [Jesus] into her house” (v.38). She opened up her home to Jesus to show Him hospitality and to support Him in His work. Today, of course, Jesus’ visible ministry on earth has come to a close. And yet, He wants to draw near to you, to come to you, to enter every human heart and make His home with each of us. How does He do this? Simply by His word and sacraments. For example, when that devotional book *Portals of Prayer* arrives at your home you might say it is Jesus knocking at your door, wanting to come to you through His word. When we open up these devotions and read the Scriptures and take them to heart we are saying, “Come, Lord Jesus, come into our house.” Today we note three things about welcoming Jesus into our house.

— I —

We need Jesus to come into our homes! We see that in the home of Martha and Mary there was tension and conflict. Martha thought Mary was shirking her responsibility.

So often our homes become the place where conflict swirls about and the tension is so thick you can cut it with a knife. Our home should be a haven, a

quiet and safe place for every member of the family. All too often, it is just the opposite. It becomes a place for conflict, for hurt feelings, for abuse of one kind or another. Whatever is going on in your house, you can be sure that Jesus is needed there! Sinners live at your address, and Jesus is the Friend of Sinners, the Savior from sin and damnation, the healer of all hurts and wounds. That's the kind of home where we do need Jesus to be present, where we need Him to speak the one thing needful. We need Him to speak to our hearts and say, "I forgive you, and I will help you forgive those in your house who have hurt you."

Our houses are such busy places! There are so many things that crowd out the word of God! Remember Jesus' Parable of the Sower? He said the seed of the word of God that fell among thorns is like the word of God choked out by "the cares and riches and pleasures of life" (Luke 8:14). The word becomes unfruitful because we do not give it room. For this, also, we need Jesus' forgiving, life-giving word in our house!

— II —

Secondly, consider that we welcome Jesus into our homes to receive the one thing that is necessary. Martha wanted to give something to Jesus, but Jesus was more pleased with Mary, who let Him give His good things to 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" (vv.41-42). What is that "good portion" which Mary chose? It is the gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Notice the posture of Mary. We do not read that Mary and Jesus had a little chit-chat over coffee at the kitchen table. This was not a conversation between equals. This was the disciple, the learner, sitting at the feet of her Master. Mary recognized Jesus as her Lord. Jesus was over her and she accepted that. Jesus was the Giver and she was the receiver.

If we invite Jesus into our house are we willing to sit at Jesus' feet and listen and learn? Many would like Jesus to sit at their feet because they have a thing or two they would like to tell Him about the way the world is being run. We would like to say to Jesus, "Do it my way." Jesus is all about giving His gifts through His word, the one thing needful.

Why is it that more people do not come to Bible Class? Is it merely the fact that we are busy, or is it that we do not want to listen to what the Lord has to say? I fear it is because we want to make our own decisions about things like morality—what is right and what is wrong—without having to bend our opinions to the words that the Lord has revealed in the Bible. We want to be the lord and master of the religion that we create in our minds, instead of letting the Holy Scriptures mold and bend us to the will of the Lord. Come and forgive us, Lord!

Was Martha's service acceptable to the Lord? Yes, indeed! There was nothing wrong with the way that she showed love to Jesus. What was wrong was her attitude that her sister ought to give up her time to sit at Jesus' feet in order to do housework. This was a rare opportunity! The Son of God is sitting in your house ready to teach you and to answer your questions and you are going to spend time cooking and baking and cleaning? Yet, we do not read that Martha put down her work and they all went out to the Bethany McDonald's. They no doubt ate what Martha prepared. Some churches have a "Mary-Martha Society" in which the ladies both study God's word and perform works of service for others. They sit at Jesus' feet and they busy themselves with much serving. It is not an either/or proposition: the very people who listen to the Lord's teaching and are changed by it are often the ones most likely to give of their time, treasure, and talent to serve others.

We like to come to Jesus' house once a week or once or twice a month. Isn't that enough? Jesus wants to come and live in your house. He wants to make a home in your heart and never leave there. He wants to be there every day all the time, showing us our sin and leading and guiding and comforting us. There was nothing else from Jesus for Mary except speech. The word of Jesus was all that she got from Him—there was no gold or silver, no bank notes or certificates of deposit. Jesus did nothing else for Mary except speak. And she listened and took it in. And she was richly blessed beyond gold and silver!

— III —

Finally, consider the benefits to our faith when we welcome Jesus into our home. You can see the faith of these two sisters when we meet them again. Their time with Jesus in their home certainly had a positive effect. We hear of

them two more times, John 11 and John 12. In John 11 we read they wanted to Jesus to come to their village and enter their house because their brother Lazarus was sick. They sent word to Jesus on the road. When Jesus got the word He tested their faith in order to give glory to God. When Jesus found out about Lazarus, we simply read, “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was” (John 11:5). An official at Capernaum had a son who was at the point of death. Jesus told him, “Go; your son will live” and that boy was made well that very moment (John 4:46-54). A centurion there had a servant was sick at home. When Jesus heard about it He immediately responded “I will come and heal him” (Matthew 8:7). But when it comes to Mary and Martha, who had welcomed Jesus and provided for Him, Jesus deliberately stays away! That must have brought a terrible time of testing for Martha and Mary. “Where is Jesus?” they must have asked themselves as Lazarus grew worse and worse and finally died. And then they said, “If Jesus had been here, our brother would not have died.” It seemed Jesus had forgotten them! In reality, He was stretching their faith and in the process setting up a great miraculous sign, the raising of a man from the dead whose body had already been in the tomb four days. Their time with Jesus in their home fortified them for the tests that would be coming to them. When Jesus finally gets there, Martha meets Him outside the village and speaks words that show how she feels hurt but also confesses her faith. She says, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you” (John 11:21-22). Jesus answers: “Your brother will rise again” (v. 23). Martha responds with words to show that she has understood the teaching of the Scriptures: “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day” (v.24). Jesus responds with those famous words, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (vv.25-26). Then Jesus adds a pointed question to her, “Do you believe this?” She immediately gives this solid confession of faith: “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world” (v.27). When you face times of waiting on the Lord, times when it appears that

God has disregarded your prayers, when you must bury a loved one, you will be prepared if you have sat at the feet of Jesus in your home. His promises, the instruction from his holy Word, will sustain you when you struggle. The two sisters give their permission to open the grave of their brother—an act of faith in the Lord Jesus, for sure—and Jesus calls Lazarus from the tomb alive. So many come to believe in Jesus as a result that the chief priests and Pharisees become more determined than ever to put Jesus to death.

In the next chapter we read of a dinner that took place in Bethany a day or two before Jesus' rides triumphantly into Jerusalem. Guess who was serving the meal? None other than Martha! But the meal is best remembered for what Mary did: She brought in some extremely expensive perfume and anointed Jesus' body with it. She anointed both His head (Matthew 26:7) and His feet (John 12:3). The disciples, especially Judas, objected: "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii [almost a year's wages] and given to the poor?" (John 12:5). How extravagant! And yet Jesus commends her: "She has anointed my body beforehand for burial" (Mark 14:8). This Mary seems to have been one of the very few who understood Jesus' death and resurrection ahead of time. The disciples were still caught up in all kinds of fantasies about an immediate earthly Kingdom under the Messiah. But she knew that Jesus must die for the sins of the world and she also knew that He would rise again and that there would be no opportunity to anoint Him later. (Remember the women who went to the tomb of Jesus early that Sunday morning after Jesus died? They had prepared spices with which to anoint Jesus' body, but they never got to use them (Mark 16:1-6)! With regards to Mary's anointing Jesus promised: "Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" (Mark 14:9). Where did Mary get that kind of understanding and faith? Surely from listening at the feet of Jesus. Listen and believe, and he will strengthen your faith as well! Amen.