

Martha, Martha

“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things” (Luke 10:41).

Bad hearing seems to be a Hayes’ family trait. My grandfather Hayes could hardly hear at all. My dad had great difficulty hearing certain sounds. And now I have a battle hearing some tones in various environments. It is embarrassing to have to say to others, “Pardon me, I didn’t hear what you said,” or “I’m sorry, would you repeat that?” I find myself depending on my right ear, which is my best ear, and turning it towards the conversation.

The most annoying aspect is not being able to hear soft voices. It seems they tail away from me and I fail to understand certain words. Those who have very perceptive hearing would be convinced that I have selective hearing or hear what I want to hear. I guess I do have the ability to turn my ears off to things that I don’t enjoy. But if you were on my left side, I might ask you to repeat some words again.

When the Lord Jesus said, “Martha, Martha,” the fifth double-call in the Bible, there is no indication that she had impaired hearing. And there is no suggestion that she didn’t want to hear the Savior. The truth is that the Shepherd wanted this sheep’s devoted attention. His words represent His intense desire to minister to her in holy matters. What was said certainly leaves us with some divine directives.

The double-call to Martha leaves us with a special indictment! It must be understood that Jesus was not mad at Martha. She had welcomed Him into their house and was preparing a meal for Him (see 10:38-40). His charge to her life, “thou art careful and troubled about many things,” was to make known to her one of her weaknesses. It was an indictment that fits many believers. It seems we often caught up with the “many things” of life.

The double-call to Martha leaves us with a single instruction! Having unveiled her failure with a negative fact, the Lord Jesus went on to give Martha a positive word. His distinct message was, “But one thing is needful” (10:42). She was not only made aware that “many things” had distracted her, but that she must also focus on “one thing.” Oh, may we join the Apostle and testify of the single-eye lifestyle—“this one thing I do” (Philippians 3:13).

The double-call to Martha leaves us with a spiritual incentive! While Jesus had to be somewhat stern with Martha, He sang Mary’s praises. Yet in commending her devotion with the statement, “Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away” (10:42), He gave each of His followers in all ages an incentive to find a place “at Jesus’ feet” and listen to His Word (10:39). May our hearts be aroused in this area.