

Rev. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

8/16/09 "The Single-mindedness of the Faithful" Luke 10: 38-42

Jesus was invited to the home of two sisters. The elder sister was Martha; the younger one was Mary. Martha was nervous that day; she had to feed and entertain Jesus. She was working frantically to make herself acceptable to him.

Mary, the younger sister, on the other hand, sat at the feet of Jesus, paying close attention to every word he was speaking.

Seeing her sister unhelpful, Martha was irritated. She interrupted Jesus and said, "Master, please tell my sister to help me."

Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing is important. Mary has chosen it."

The two sisters were given the same opportunity: to welcome Jesus to their home to hear him. But Martha was fussing over entertaining him. So she missed a true encounter with Jesus.

Mary, on the other hand, sat at the foot of Jesus. She opened herself to him. She accepted Jesus.

Martha tried to make herself acceptable to him by cleaning house and entertaining him. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus to hear him.

We should learn an important lesson from the story of Mary and Martha.

We are to sit at the feet of Jesus before doing anything. We are to hear him first. Our service to Christ comes naturally. The reverse is not true.

Every Sunday you wake up, there are several choices you can make. You can sleep late. You can go to movies. You can watch T.V.

But if you choose to worship God, you abandon these possibilities. You choose to get up on time, take the subway, and come to JAUC, to sit at the feet of Jesus.

From tomorrow on, another week of mundane life starts. Will we continue to pray? Will we read the Bible? Will we think about Christ? Or will we allow our mundane life to take over and forget the one thing that is essential, Jesus' words?

In short, who will we be from Monday on, Mary or Martha? If we are honest with ourselves, we cannot be so confident to declare that we will be Mary.

But that's all right. Jesus spoke to the aggravated Martha by calling her twice, "Martha, Martha."

In the Bible, calling another's name twice is an expression of tenderness toward that person. That is, Jesus gently chided Martha and persuaded her to learn an important lesson from her younger sister.

Christ loved Mary, to be sure, but he did not give up on Martha, either. He does not give up on us.

Let us do our best to sit at the feet of Jesus this week. Let us try to be Mary every day. Jesus will commend us for that. He will take care of the rest.

Thanks be to God.