

# Meeting Jesus

## Mary of Bethany

### Foundation

#### Bible passage : Luke 10.38-42, John 11 & John 12.1-8

The gospels record three meetings of this Mary and Jesus. The first was when Jesus was present at the home of her sister Martha (Luke 10). Whilst Martha fussed about doing the proper thing by catering for their special guest and others, Mary sat listening to Jesus.

It is easy to understand why Martha got exasperated and eventually asked Jesus to tell her sister to help. Jesus responded, gently, by saying that Mary had “chosen the good portion”. Whatever the importance and value of hospitality, to listen to Jesus, and indeed to follow Him is far more important.

“Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

The second encounter came after the death of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. This is the subject of Unit 10 in this Module but we see how the sisters had sent message to Jesus for help before their brother died, but he delayed in coming. When Jesus finally came Martha went out to meet him (25). But Mary only went when

#### Further background

Mary was a popular name and Mary of Bethany is not the same as Mary Magdalene. At least twice, and probably on three separate occasions, women anointed Jesus feet at a meal. Washing the feet of visitors was normal and it is possible the later events were inspired by the first.



summoned by Jesus (v28). In the conversation she showed her faith that Jesus could have healed Lazarus, but had not yet understood that He not only has power over sickness but also death. However, when Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus and commanded the dead man to come out, they saw first His authority over death.

In the third encounter the formerly dead man and his two sisters were again with Jesus and it is easy to see why Mary's gratitude to Jesus prompted her to do what she did. Martha was again serving and Mary was again at Jesus' feet but this time to anoint His feet with expensive ointment and wipe them with her hair. Judas Iscariot was annoyed by the apparent waste of money, but it showed the depth of Mary's gratitude. It is a reminder that when people understand what Jesus has done for us it should change our lives and mean that we show our gratitude. But, Jesus used the incident to speak about the significance of what Mary did, without realising it.

Six days later Jesus died and was laid in a tomb. After the Sabbath the women went to the tomb to anoint the body, but they were too late! He who is “The Resurrection and the Life” was risen.



**Mary understood the importance of Jesus and His teaching and showed her gratitude for His goodness.**