

# THE FIRST 15

Wednesday June 26, 2024

Today is Wednesday, June 26 and we are studying what the Bible says about rest and renewal.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Holy and loving Lord, amid the pressures of another busy day with the many plans, activities, appointments, and demands, I pause to find a place of rest. I close my eyes and seek the calming peace of your abiding presence. I breathe deeply, in and out, allowing myself to relax in a quiet space of serene stillness. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38-42***

## REFLECTION

Jesus and the disciples often visited Bethany. The village was the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and where Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 11:1-44). Bethany was a place that provided refuge for Jesus and his followers from imposing crowds and threats of the authorities. It was a place of peace, a haven for rest. Bethany was located two miles east of Jerusalem at the foot of the Mount of Olives. In this passage, Mary sits at the feet of Jesus listening to his teaching. Sitting at the feet of a rabbi was a posture of learning that was reserved exclusively for men. Jesus clearly encouraged Mary to choose this place.

Jesus gently rebukes Martha's well-intended overfunctioning. She made the decision that a simple meal was not sufficient. She was worried and upset about the preparations, so much so that it prevented her from spending precious quality time with her guest. Jesus approved Mary's preference for stopping, resting and listening to his teaching. Alongside Mary and Martha, I am also invited to set aside my worries, sit at the feet of Jesus, rest in his presence and learn from him.

Where do I find myself in today's scripture? Am I like Martha, welcoming Jesus into my home, opening the door for him to enter, wanting to offer him my very best? Do I spend my time busily working to serve Jesus? Do I find myself distracted, worried, or upset by many things? I pause and consider my list of worries and concerns. Does my busy life cause me to have negative emotions or become cross about the behaviors and choices of others? Perhaps I am like Mary, spending time resting at the feet of Jesus. Have I chosen time to be with him, learn from him and find renewal? What does it look like to sit at the feet of Jesus? How does Jesus want me to spend time in his presence?

I imagine Mary's perspective. I rest peacefully on the earthen floor as Jesus reclines in a simple chair. I look up into his eyes and listen attentively to his voice. He is speaking truth and revealing the mysteries of the world. He teaches me the way to live my life, answers every question and resolves every doubt. I am thankful for the privilege and opportunity. I treasure this peaceful time of spiritual rest and quiet renewal.

**Ask:** How much time do I spend resting at the feet of Jesus, reading his words in the Gospels and learning from him? How much time do I spend going and doing, busily worrying about all I need to accomplish in another day?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy Lord Jesus, like Mary, I treasure the opportunity to rest at your feet and abide in your loving presence. Help me to see how I am unnecessarily distracted by many tasks and worried and upset about many things. Show me the one thing that is needed, time with you. Help me to choose the better way of resting in you, soaking in the Spirit and learning from you. I open the door of my heart to you, I welcome you into my home. I set aside my distractions, I lay down my worries and concerns, I put away my agenda, I choose your way. Amen.*