**Living Like Mary in a Martha World: A Social and Cultural Analysis of Luke 10:38-42**

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Abstract

The paper presents the analysis of the role of Martha and Mary in the book of Luke in welcoming Jesus. It is also analyzed how the book of Luke 10:33-42 is related to social and cultural issues.

**Introduction**

# The book of Luke provides one of the best illustrations of social and cultural aspects of life. Luke 10:38-42, illustrates the life of Jesus in Bethlehem and the treatment he received from women in the church. Before the coming of Jesus to the Bethlehem women leaders were involved in a serious competition on who can provide the best hospitality. Traditionally, women were role was to provide treatment to the guest ad ensure that the guest are fine. However, throughout the book of Luke, how women are portrayed is clearly demonstrated by the role of Mary and Martha and the commend Jesus gave Martha (Agouridēs, 2002). Therefore, in the book of Luke 10:38-452, women are socially bonded to their role and therefore, the book showed cleat distinction on which role a women is supposed to play and what is meant for men in the society. It is therefore, important to point out that the book of Luke 10:38-42 demotes women to specific role, which could be seen as lesser in the society and this could what Jesus rejected. Therefore, women are classified and provided a preferred in the book Luke.

# Social and Cultural Analysis

# The story of Martha with Jesus could be traced from the first time Jesus arrived in Bethlehem. In the book of Luke 10:38-42, Martha welcomed Jesus and started to follow the teachings of Jesus. In Luke 10:38-42, it is pointed out that Martha welcomed Jesus into her home which she shared with her sister Mary. Martha together with her brother was close friend of Jesus (Behrend, 1994). They follow Jesus and helped in several tasks including preparing food for guests. At Martha’s home, she kept busy with her normal tasks. It is pointed that despite the fact that they had a gust, her sister Mary sat silently listening to wise words from Jesus. This therefore, illustrates the role played by Martha in social aspect of people’s life. However, Mary assumed the role of men in the society. It is pointed out that when Jesus arrived Marry took a long key and comfortable sat on the feet of Jesus rather than take part in the preparation of food for the guests. This point out the social and cultural beliefs, which are captured in the book of Luke 10:38-42.

# Traditionally, women and men have distinct role to play in the society. Women are had not say and are supposed to do certain things such as preparing food. This aspect is reflected in the book of Luke. It is pointed out that Martha preferred to be in Kitchen to prepare food and therefore, Marry was being viewed as ungrounded and only competing with men in the society. She showed care and attentions to guests throughout when at her house and other places of teachings. In her house, she felt that she should be in the kitchen and when Mary failed to come to help her, she took her to apologize to Jesus (Blomberg, 2016). She said “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to me Luke 10:40” (Hearon, 2004) .This means that she feels cultural responsible for taking care of guests and therefore, she feels that Mary has women should realize her role and provide help in the Kitchen. However, unfortunately she did not get support from Jesus as she expected. Jesus told her to stop getting worried a lot. Jesus pointed out that Mary has chosen a path she like most and therefore, should not be taken away from her (Albig, 2014). Martha believed that the role of comforting guest and storytelling is for men and therefore, it was uncultured for her sister Mary to sit and story with Jesus. It was of her expectation that Jesus would ask Mary to her to prepare meal but to her surprise she was not supported which was a slap in her face. This could be because she left Jesus alone and as a guest Jesus felt the void or distance and therefore, Jesus recognized the presence of Mary. In life every guest wants accompany, and Jesus might have been expecting Martha to sit with him and story. Jesus pointed out that she was too worried and she should relax (Carter, 2014). Jesus said *“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”*In this case, it means that Jesus disagree with Martha’s perceptions on the role Mary was supposed to play. In this case, it could mean that Jesus rejected male chauvinism and cultural beliefs on the role of women in the society (Loritts, 2017).

# In cultural grounded society the worth of a woman is measured by the number of activities she does. The productivity is evaluated and a woman is judged based on her actions when guest are around (Peterson, 2019). It is a tradition that a worth of woman is measured by how busy a woman is and how many task she accomplished and how women meet the expectation of others. This measure introduces the cultural aspect of life and therefore, it provides the opportunity to solve the cultural practices. Therefore, the activities and other actions taking by Martha showed the cultural and social role of a woman in traditional society. It is cleared Martha felt entitle to keep Jesus happy by providing the best hospitality she could. This is the hope of most women in the traditional society even to the current society as well. Martha believed she had the best opportunity to serve Jesus and provide the best hospital and therefore, the reaction of Jesus was surprising and unfortunate.

# However, we can learn a lot from the action of Martha and the respond she got from Jesus. Martha did what she could to provide the best hospitality but unfortunate thing she never involve Jesus. She arrived home and never informed Jesus what she doing and left to the Kitchen to prepare meal and she expected her sister Mary to join her. This means that Jesus was not involved and therefore, he could not be happy (Rakoczy, 2015). It is important for us to involve Jesus and the Lord in everything we do for it to successful. Without involving Jesus we can never succeeds. Therefore, the Christian value of the lesson learnt from the visit is to be corporate and work together and always involve Jesus Christian in everything we do. Though, it is pointed out in Luke 22-24-26 that Mary showed a lot discipline by sitting to story with Jesus (Salmon, 2014). We can portray Martha in negative aspect because of playing her role as women. It is clear that Mary violated her traditional responsibility and acted like a guest a time when her help is needed most to serve.

# Definition of Terms

# There are several terms which are used and can be illustrated to make it easy to understand the book of Luke. Jesus is the Christ, and savior.

# Conclusions

# The analysis of the book of Luke 10:38-42 established that, it provided a description of women role and what is expected of women when guest right. Our instinct tells that Jesus ought to have supported Martha and asked Mary to join her in the preparation of meals. This could not happen until we understand the reason of the Jesus visit. This therefore, illustrates the role played by Martha in social aspect of people’s life. However, Mary assumed the role of men in the society (Rakoczy R. S., 2014). It is pointed out that when Jesus arrived Marry took a long key and comfortable sat on the feet of Jesus rather than take part in the preparation of food for the guests. This point out the social and cultural beliefs, which are captured in the book of Luke 10:38-42. It is therefore, evidence that the book of Luke is related to social and cultural practices and the discussion aligned women to specific job in the society.

# Future Research

# The research has been conducted regarding social and cultural aspects of Mary and Martha role when Jesus went to Bethlehem. However, it is important to conduct further studies to understand the teaching of the words of Jesus when at Martha’s home. Jesus said that Mary is involved in what makes her happy and there is no need to ask her to leave. This happened when Martha requested Jesus to ask Mary to her to prepare meals. The questions is could it be possible that Jesus was against the cultural referring and giving women specific role in the society and by asking Martha to let Mary rest, he meant it should be by culture that women should be in the kitchen and are allowed to story when guest are around. It is important established the perspective of Jesus so that we can fully understand the cultural and social views presented in the book of Luke 10:38:42 (Gench, 2017). The future research should also focus on the teachings we learn from the visit, actions and the word of Jesus was talking to Martha and Mary when he was at Martha’s home. This would help distinct what to do and when to do it and this will also help us to identify some of the things we do to in order to impress Jesus. It is also important to understand the reason for the visit of Jesus.

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