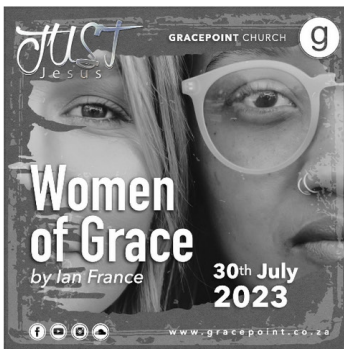


## Women of Grace – Ian France – 30.7.2023



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38:34



## Luke 8:2-3; 10:38-42

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.



Only Jesus // Brian Johnson

## Observation

### Luke 8:1-3

This may well be the second time Jesus had visited these villages and towns. On the previous occasion the disciples had not yet been called (Luke 4:42-44), but now they were with Him. He preached and spoke of the Good News of the Kingdom of God wherever He went. In addition to the disciples, Luke mentions 'certain women' who were travelling with Jesus. This was unusual as the Jewish religious leaders refused to teach women. They were considered inferior in society. Luke names some of these women:

Mary called Magdalene: Mary had been demon possessed and Jesus had freed her. Some think she was a prostitute by Scripture does not identify her in this way.

Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward: Joanna was a lady who would have lived in the court of Herod/ She came from a very different background to Mary Magdalene. Joanna's husband looked after Herod's finances. He would have been a trusted, important official.

Both Mary and Joanna were the first to meet the resurrected Jesus on the Sunday morning after His crucifixion.

There were other women too who offered help to Jesus – whether providing financial help or food.

Jesus was never too proud to accept the offer of such help and receive what they could provide for Him.

### *Luke 10.38-42*

Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus were close friends of Jesus. They lived in Bethany, a village just over 3 kilometres outside Jerusalem. Martha was so busy preparing the meal for their visitors that she did not listen to what Jesus was saying. Even though she was serving Jesus, she had a lot to do and she became irritated when she thought about all she was doing and how little her sister was doing to help.

Mary on the other hand, was oblivious to what was happening in the kitchen and sat and drank in Jesus' words, as if she was a true disciple, like the men were. This would have been unusual in some circles at the time. Whilst there were no set rules to stop women from becoming disciples and follow a rabbi, it was unusual for them to do so as many rabbis would not teach women. When Martha complained to Jesus about the situation, Jesus commended Mary for her devotion.

#### *Icebreaker:*

Who was the greatest teacher you ever had? What subject did they teach you? How has what they taught you influenced your life? How are you passing on the knowledge they instilled in you to others?

#### **Application.**

- Would you place yourself in the kitchen with Martha (or any place of practical work) or do you see yourself sitting soaking in Jesus' teaching? In other words, are you a person who acts or one who spends time in contemplation? Does your gender influence your response? Why?
- How would you deal with such a situation – whether you see yourself in Martha's role or Mary's? Does your answer differ when you consider Jesus' presence if the situation involved some other well-known personality?
- What gender roles are you aware of in your personal life? Do you find you live your life according to society's concept of these roles, or do you live 'out of the box'? Are you willing to make exceptions from time to time?

- Men, how do you feel about helping in the kitchen or performing a role which society allocates to women when the need arises, in front of other men?
- Ladies, how do you feel about being part of a group in your own home when you are the hostess and it means the meal will be delayed?
- Do these roles sit comfortably with you or do they make you feel awkward? Are they important to you? Why? How would you deal with such situations?
- How much time do you spend in the busyness of life? What percentage of your time do you spend in active service for God? What percentage do you spend in contemplating His word and setting aside time to be with Him? How do you feel when you consider this ratio:
  - Time spent in the busy-ness of life 1 : time spent in actively serving God : time spent in contemplation? What do you think God is saying to you today about this ratio? Are you too busy?
- Jesus has come to set you free. What does this freedom mean in your own life at this time? If you accept His freedom, how would that impact your life on a day to day basis? Are you willing to allow His freedom to influence your life? Why/why not?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

## **Prayer**

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

## **Service**

Try to be aware of how you are naturally reacting to various situations in the coming week. Are you a Martha, doing what Martha does, or a Mary, letting life happen around you as you spend time with God? Try to take on the other sister's role at some time. How does this make you feel? Do you have a greater awareness of the people playing another role? Are there times when you could do both active service and contemplation? Report back to the group next week as to how you dealt with any situation in this regard.

## **Bibliography**

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-10/>  
<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-8/>