

JESUS AND MARY: THE REAL NEEDS OF MAN JOHN 11:28–37

Introduction

Man has great needs. These are seen in the experience of Mary with Jesus.

- I Need 1: the glorious message of Christ (v. 28).
- II Need 2: the right response — arise quickly and come to Christ (vv. 29-30)
- III Need 3: the reaching out of people to help others (v. 31).
- IV Need 4: the confession of faith (even if it is limited and weak) (v. 32).
- V Need 5: the understanding and compassion of Jesus
- VI Conclusion: the misunderstanding of people: How could Jesus love so much and let this happen? (v. 37)

I. *John 11:28 The Message of Jesus Christ*

The first need is for the glorious message of Christ. Martha had made a great confession of faith: “Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world” (Jn 11: 27)

The great confession apparently struck some kind of hope within Martha. Just what she was expecting, perhaps even she did not know, but there was a spark of hope. Her Lord, the Son of God Himself, was now with her. Whatever could be done would be done; whatever help was available would be given. Her faith and trust were in Him. Only one thing was missing: her dear sister, Mary. So she hastened to share the glorious news with her. Note that she shared three things.

1. Christ is the Teacher (See *The Teacher*, Jn. 11:28).
2. The Teacher is *here*. The answer that we so desperately need is now available. The One who can give us the help we need has now come: the Teacher who can teach us how to meet all of our...
 - needs and necessities
 - troubles and trials
 - sorrow and hurt
 - loneliness and emptiness

Mat 20:28 “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

3. The Master asks *for you*. Jesus calls and summons you. He wonders where you are and why you have not come. He wants you now.

Mat 11:28-29 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Isa 55:1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

JOHN 11:28 THE TEACHER (HO DIDASKALOS)

The definite article (the) is important. Jesus is not just another teacher like all other teachers. He is *the* Teacher, the teaching Master. This means at least two things.

1. Jesus is the Supreme Teacher, the very best teacher who has ever lived. He is known for being the greatest of teachers. No one even comes close to comparing with Him. He stands *alone as the Teacher*.
2. Jesus is the Master, the Lord, the Teacher of all men. In calling Jesus the Teacher, there is the idea of His Lordship and deity. Note that He claims deity Himself: “You call me Teacher and Lord: and rightly so, for that is what I am” (Jn. 13:13). His being the Teacher is tied closely with His being the Lord: In fact, logic alone would tell us that the Lord would be the greatest Teacher among all men.

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 5:31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Rom 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

1 Cor 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. □

II. John 11:29–30 The Right Response to Jesus Christ

The second need is to make the right response to Christ — the response of arising quickly and running to Him.

1. The message of Christ was enough to stir Mary. It is enough to stir action within the heart of any person who honestly seeks the answer to the riddle and trials of life and death.

2. When Mary heard, she responded quickly. The idea is that she jumped up quickly and ran to meet Jesus. Hope and expectation were stirred in her heart. Note that the message had come to her in a very quiet manner: secretly, in a whisper, without anyone else knowing it (v. 28).

1 Cor 8:6 Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

1 Cor. 12:3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

Thought 1. No matter how quietly the message is proclaimed, man is to respond by arising quickly and running to meet Jesus.

3. Mary acted on her own and made her own decision.

⇒ She did not consult with friends and neighbours, not even with those who were closest to her. She got up and went to Jesus, leaving both friends and neighbours behind.

⇒ She did not consult with religionists. Religion was important to her. The local religious leaders were even present, visiting and comforting her in her sorrow and sharing the comfort that their religion offered. But it helped her so little. When she heard the message that the Lord was calling for her, she went to Him, saying nothing to the religionists.

⇒ She did not consider appearance or decorum. Think about the situation. The house was full of friends and neighbours. Who was going to greet them, receive their sympathies, express appreciation, and handle their presence? None of that mattered to Mary, not now. The Lord was calling for her. She must respond and go to Him immediately.

⇒ She did not consider the distance. Jesus had not yet entered town, so Mary had to walk a considerable distance to reach Him. She had to make the decision to break away from those back in the house despite what they might think and feel. She had to march forward and travel to Him in order to respond to His call.

Luke 11:9-10 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

2 Cor 6:2 For he says, "In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation.

Deu 30:19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

III. *John 11:31 Ministering to the Needy*

The third need is for people, friends and neighbours, to reach out to help each other. This is a touching picture. When the neighbours and friends saw Mary leave quickly, they thought she was going to the tomb to mourn over Lazarus. They were with her for one reason: to “comfort” her. Naturally, they followed her, thinking she needed help in bearing her loss. Note what happened.

1. They, too, were brought face-to-face with Jesus. Because they were set on comforting Mary, they were to share in Mary’s experience with Christ.
2. They, too, were given the opportunity to trust Christ. In fact, many did believe, “put their faith in Him” (v. 45).

Thought 1. The friends and neighbours set a clear example of helping others. The world needs more and more neighbours such as these. Note the result of sincere help. It does not go unnoticed by Christ. Many are brought to Christ when they help those who already know Christ.

Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

Rom 15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Gal. 6:2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Heb 13:3 Remember those: in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

IV. *John 11:32 Confession of Faith*

The fourth need is the confession of faith, even if the faith is limited and weak. As soon as Mary saw Jesus, she fell at His feet in homage and worship and made a confession of faith in Him.

1. She called Him, “Lord” (See *Teacher*, Jn. 11:28; and *Lord*, Phil. 2:11).
2. She expresses, however, the same complaining, limited faith that Martha did (See Note, Jn. 11:21-22).

Thought 1. The need of man is to make a genuine confession of faith. Even if one’s belief and confession are weak, they will grow as one walks with Jesus day by day.

Mat 10:32 “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.”

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

Phil 2:11 *And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1 John 4:15 *If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

PHILIPPIANS 02: 11 LORD (KURIOS)

Lord means master, owner. Jesus was called Lord from the very first of His ministry (Mt. 8:2) and He accepted the title. He even called Himself Lord (Mt. 7:21). The word had been a title of respect throughout history. During the Roman empire it became the official title of Roman emperors. It was also a title given to the gods. The Hebrew title Adonai is translated Lord (Gen. 15:2), so is Jehovah (Mt. 1:20-22; 2:15; 3:3; 4:7, 10; 11:25; 21:9; Mk. 12:29-30; Lk. 1:68; 2:9). Both titles, Adonai and Jehovah, are translated Lord in Mt. 22:44. Jesus Himself called God the Father, “Lord” (Mt. 4:7, 10). But the title is more often given to Jesus. There is no question that Jesus is recognized as Lord, being identical with the Old Testament Jehovah and Adonai (Mt. 3:3; 12:8; 21:9; 22:43-45; Lk. 1:43; Jn. 14:8-10; 20:28; Acts 9:5). When Jesus is called Lord, it means that He is Master and Owner, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the only true God. He is Jehovah, Adonai, God Himself. □

V. *John 11:33–36 The Compassion of Jesus Christ*

The fifth need is the understanding, feelings and compassion of Jesus. Note three things.

1. Jesus “was deeply moved [*enebrimesato*] in spirit.” The word “moved” is often interpreted to mean stern reaction, displeasure, or anger (because of its use in other places). Some interpreters feel that Jesus was angry with the friends and neighbours because of their loud wailing and moaning, feeling that they were being hypocritical and insincere in their sorrow. This interpretation is difficult to see.

⇒ Mary was certainly sincere in her sorrow, and Jesus was definitely touched by her need.

⇒ The Jewish friends and neighbours (which were “many,” v. 19) were sincere in “comforting” her (v. 31), and many were open to trusting the Lord (v. 45). Jesus was certainly touched by those as well.

In light of the whole scene, it seems best to see Jesus gripped with intense emotion. He was deeply moved...

- by Mary, who was so broken in sorrow
- by Martha, who was gripped by pain and hurt

- by those who were really feeling the death of Lazarus and the sorrow of the family
- by the terrible tragedy of death and the pain it causes
- by the terrible price He was soon to pay conquering death. (This was certainly glimpsed by Jesus in such a scene as He was now experiencing.)

Jesus is *deeply moved in spirit*: He is moved in understanding and feeling and compassion for all who are hurting and suffering. The word troubled (etaraxen heauton) means agitated, moved deeply, disturbed within. Jesus was actually feeling the misery and pain of all. His spirit was disturbed and agitated, deeply moved by the whole scene of sorrow and death.

2. Jesus asked where the dead (person) was. Note that Jesus knew where the grave was, but He asked where it was for two reasons.

=> If He had gone straight to the tomb, there was the possibility of some charging Him and Lazarus with being in collusion and tricking the people.

=> He needed to distract the people from their deep wailing and arouse their expectation for something unusual about to happen.

Note also that Jesus demonstrated His concern over the dead. He wishes to know where every dead person is, both those who are spiritually dead and those who are *physically dead*. He wants to point man's attention to the fact that all men lie in the grave. All must look to Him if they wish to escape death (Heb. 9:27; Jn. 3:16; 5:24.)

3. "Jesus wept" in love. Why? He wept over death, over man's pain, sorrow, suffering, and fate. Man was never made for sin and death; man was made for righteousness and life. Sin and death...
 - deceive and lie
 - hurt and maim
 - separate and alienate
 - misuse and defeat
 - destroy and corrupt
 - condemn and doom eternally

Rom 8:35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

Heb 4:15 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.*

Psa 78:39 *He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.*

Psa 103:13 *As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.*

Psa 103:17 *But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.*

Isa 63:9 In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

VI. John 11:37 The Misunderstanding of People

The misunderstanding of man. The people asked the same question that is so often asked by men of every generation. How could Jesus love so much and let this happen? The problem, of course, is not Jesus. People just do not understand...

- that the nature of the world is decay and corruption, trial and trouble, suffering and pain, death and hell — all because of selfishness and sin.
- that trials and sickness can be an opportunity for God to do a great work (See Note, Jn. 11:4).

Mat 5:45 That you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

1 Cor 15:42-44 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Cor 15:50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

2 Pet 1:4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ■