

Sunday Sermon: 8/10/2019

Sermon Text: Luke 10:38-42

Sermon Theme: Am I Mary or Martha?

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

⁴⁰ 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!"

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

When I was a child I loved story time. Whether it was at the library, or in Kindergarten, or even with my mom, I loved sitting on a lap or on the floor, and to just listen to the story that was being told. I never liked that story time had to end.

I still love a good story. I like the quiet time when I can sit and read a good story. Sometimes I will read and think, just one more chapter. That turns into a few more chapters until it is the early hours of the morning.

So often in the world we have so many things going on that we don't have that quiet time doing the things that actually calm us, that we actually enjoy. Our minds are filled with this piece of business, that piece of news, or this thing that has to get done that we are almost never at peace. We almost never slow down.

Except we need to. We need to have special time for at least one thing. That is to hear and study God's Word. As we look at Mary and Martha this morning, we want to ask ourselves. When it comes to God's Word am I Mary or am I Martha?

This Bible lesson could take place at any one of our houses at any of the gathering times of the year. Put yourself into Martha's shoes.

For a women in Jewish society, this would have been a very big occasion. This would have been an occasion worth putting in the best effort because it showed her skills as a hostess.

Yet, when the guests arrive, she is left making sure everything is getting done correctly and her sister is nowhere in sight. Maybe she thought that Mary was doing something else somewhere else in the house.

But, when she finally finds her sister, she sees that she is not doing anything to help set up and finish the preparations, she is sitting in front of Jesus and listening to him.

I remember growing up when the family gathering was at our house. No matter how hard we cleaned or how well we prepared the week before, those last hours before the family came were always very busy.

Maybe you have been there. There is always something more to clean, something more to straighten up, another run to the store for one more thing. The last thing we should have been doing was sitting down and watching a little TV. As a child I remember my mother being very upset when she found us children not helping when we should have been.

This is what Martha was feeling. She was anxious, frustrated and angry that Mary wasn't helping.

What would you do if you were feeling like this? We don't know if Martha had tried to catch Mary's eye and wasn't successful. We don't know if she had asked Mary to help and Mary just didn't. What we do see in her statement to Jesus is that Martha questions whether Jesus even cares about all the work that is going on. She questions whether he cares about Mary not doing her part. She even asks for his help. **Tell her to help me.**

Martha's focus is very clear. She is very much focused on the preparations. The things that needed to get done to have a good meal and a pleasant stay. This was not Mary's focus.

Put yourself in Mary's shoes for a minute. Both Mary and Martha believed that this man who was in their house was the Savior. They had heard about him, maybe even heard him preach before, but now here he was in their own household. It was an intimate setting where he was preaching and teaching.

A chance to listen to the Savior speak does not come up every day. Although, there is a lot going on, Mary realizes that this is a special opportunity to hear Jesus speak. Although, there was much to do, Mary is drawn to the words of her Savior. She sits at the feet of Jesus and listens as he is speaking.

How do you think Martha felt when Jesus answered her? ⁴¹ **“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”**

Jesus hits the nail on the head. Martha you are very concerned about the preparations and all the other things that go along with being a good hostess. What you should really be worried about is taking this special time to hear the Word. That is what Mary is doing and I won't ask her to stop.

Sadly, we aren't told what happens next. We aren't told if Martha stormed out or if she sat down too. I am sure that they had a nice meal and the disciples and Jesus had a good stay at the house because that's always what happened at our family gatherings. Even if the napkins weren't perfect or the living room wasn't as tidy as it should have been, there was always a nice meal and everyone had a good time. What we do know is that these women continued to believe that this was their Savior.

Jesus still wants to be part of our life today. He still wants to be in our houses. No, he's not staying with you tomorrow. But through his Word, he is clear that he wants you to be in his house to hear his Word and to grow in faith. He calls out to you often so that you don't miss this one thing. You hear that call in bulletin, your email, when you look at a calendar, when you drive by church.

When we hear that call from Jesus there are several ways that we can respond. We can be like Mary or like Martha.

We can be like Mary, we can set it aside, we can put it down, we can see that Jesus is the most important thing above all other things. Whatever that “it” is in our lives that troubles us or causes us to be anxious. Whatever excuse we have been using to keep us from the Lord's house, it is not as important as hearing the Word of God and being ready for eternity.

That is really what Mary was choosing when she sat at Jesus' feet. She was being fed with the Word of God. The Holy Spirit was at work to build up Mary's faith in Jesus so that she knew where her hope and confidence was.

We can be like Martha and be worried about all the things that we have going on in our life. We can look at the mountain of bills and decide that we need another shift at work. We look at the number of hours we have worked this past week and decide that God understands that we need an extra hour or two of sleep, or the newspaper and coffee in our hand. We can look at the schedule of family time and decide that Sunday is time for family outings or vacations. We can even decide that a football or baseball game is more important than time with the Lord.

Sometimes we can be Martha. We are worried about all the things that we think need to get done. We get tired because we are doing so much. We become disoriented with all the things that we think are important and we don't see the devil is using those things to tempt us to lessen the time we have with the Lord or cut it out all together.

The bigger lesson here is that the devil is good at using the things we think we need to do, the priorities we set, to push God further and further down the list. It may start with reason why we are not in the Lord's house, but soon it becomes more than that. It becomes deciding that the Lord and his Word is not as important as all these other things. The many things are more important than the one thing.

There may be valid reasons to miss a service or a devotion here or there, but the greater lesson is that love of the Lord leads the heart of a believer to express our thanks that by making use of his Word inside the worship service and out. Taking special time at home to sit at Jesus' feet and listen as he speaks to us through that Word, just as we do on Sunday, when we sit at his feet and hear it.

When Jesus' said only one thing is needed he wasn't referring to health, financial security, home, safety, money, or power. The one thing that is needed is to hear his Word so that the Holy Spirit can make that faith in him strong.

As we come to the Lord's house and hear and study his Word, we will find the same Savior who answered a worried Martha and a worshipping Mary with love. He will remind us through his Word that he has blessings that he has won that he wants to give us.

When we have that time at Jesus' feet he will give us something that we cannot find in any other part of our life; not on the radio, at the job, or in the world in general. Our Savior wants to comfort us with the peace of forgiveness that he won for us with his suffering and death. He wants to comfort you with the peace of

belonging to the family of believers that is yours through faith in him. He wants to comfort you with the peace of heaven which he graciously gives even now.

As we sit at Jesus' feet and are filled with his peace, we may also find something else happening. We might see the blessing of setting it aside, putting it down like Mary did. We might see the blessing of a God who promises that not only does he save you for eternity he also cares about your steps today and tomorrow. He will never leave you. He is there to see you through your troubles. We might find some peace and quiet from the chaos that is often part of our life as we offer our prayers and worship in his house.

So, what do you think the Lord would say next time we don't have time for his Word in our lives? "Martha, Martha" There is one thing needed. Set your troubles, cares and concerns aside for a time and be with me to grow in your faith. Look, there's a seat for you right here, next to Mary.