

Theme: Freedom is not found in a life full of distractions, but in one that has reduced activities to allow time to receive Christ and His Word.

I. America - The Culture of More

- A. America likes everything BIG
- B. For us, more is always better
- C. But is more always better - or sometimes is less more?
- D. Our new series - Less Is More

II. A Tale of Two Sisters

- A. The setting: Jesus heading to Jerusalem
As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. Luke 10:38

- 1. Jesus and disciples "on their way" - to Jerusalem
- 2. Stop in Bethany (not named) in home of Martha
- 3. Luke is a bit vague because he tells story here to make a key point
- 4. These real sisters are a pattern for us

- B. The contrast between Martha and Mary
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." Luke 10:39-42

- 1. Mary quietly sits at Lord's feet; Martha distracted
- 2. Result - Martha is worried & upset - no peace
 - a. Worried - noun 17x in NT - can be attentive, but usually worried, anxious - Martha is anxious
 - b. Upset - only time for verb - noun 12x - usually commotion, uproar, confusion
 - c. Her inward state is worried about so many things, so her outward activity is confusion and bustle

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- 1. Martha is concerned about many things - Mary has one concern
- 2. Martha wants to fit Jesus in around other things - Mary fits other things around Jesus
- 3. Jesus says less is more! Mary's choice is better!

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1. Mary is listening to what God says
2. Martha is telling God what she thinks - and what He should do!
3. The end result of too many distractions - we stop listening to what God says and start telling Him what He needs to do.

C. A tale of two sisters

Martha	Mary
Distracted	Focused
Worried & upset	At peace
Many concerns	One concern
Telling God what to do	Listening to God for what to do

1. They are very different at this point!
2. Which one better describes America?
3. Which one better describes Christians in America?
4. Which one better describes me?

III. Martha's Problem - And Ours!

- A. Martha's problem is not that she is doing evil things
 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 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... Luke 10:38, 40-41

1. Martha did not reject Jesus - she opened her home to Him
2. She was making preparations worthy of a great guest
3. She is loving her neighbor - like the Good Samaritan
 - a. Luke 10:27-28 - Love God, love neighbor
 - b. Luke 10:30-37 - Good Samaritan
 - c. Martha is loving neighbor - nothing wrong in that
4. The main use of 'worried' - sermon on mount
 - a. Used 12x in NT - 9 of them in sermon on mount as recorded in Matthew 6//Luke 12
 - b. The worry Jesus warns against is food, clothing,
 - c. There is nothing wrong with these things - until they produce worry, anxiety, commotion
5. Nothing wrong with the things Martha is doing

- B. Martha's problem - good has crowded out the best
 "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." Luke 10:41-42

1. The things Martha is doing are good - but listening to Jesus is best
2. We have a tendency to let good things crowd out

the best thing - sitting and hearing Jesus

3. We think that more is better, but Jesus says less is more!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Discerning if the good has crowded out the best

1. We can't find find the time for most important things
 - a. Like Martha we can't find time - to much to do
 - b. We will have time later - but later never comes!
 - c. Example: mids who skipped meetings to study
 - d. Example: so busy planning future we miss present
 - e. We think these other things will bring the peace we seek - but they do not

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. Psalms 62:5

2. We become filled with anxiety & commotion
 - a. This is what happened to Martha - worried & upset
 - b. No time with Jesus - stress, anxiety sure to come!
 - c. A flurry of action - but no peace
 - d. Sometimes MORE activities so we don't hear convicting word!
3. God's Word is not bearing fruit in our lives
The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. Luke 8:14
 - a. Same word for worry as in our passage

- b. The 'more' of this life - worry, riches, pleasure - chokes out the Word
- c. Sounds like Martha - and maybe us???

4. Is the good the enemy of the best in my life?

B. Building a life centered on Jesus

1. We must make hearing from Jesus the first priority
 - a. We must make time to hear/read the Word daily
 1. NOTHING else is as important as this
 2. Schedule time with Jesus - that will NOT be broken
 3. This practice centers us daily - reduces stress
 - b. We must make time to gather with the church weekly
 1. This is why God gave weekly Sabbath to Israel
 2. This was why God gave regular festivals to Israel
 3. This practice centers us weekly - reorients us to the best
 - c. We must simply make a pledge and fit everything else around these things
 - d. Know that when you begin with this decision - good things will rush in to crowd out the best!
2. Practical tips for hearing from Jesus regularly
 - a. Make the most of your time in driving, chores
 1. Turn off the radio - turn on the Word
 2. Turn off the radio - turn on a time of prayer
 3. This is a great way to begin your day!

b. Ruthlessly control your schedule!

1. "You can have it all" is a MYTH!
2. We must choose where we will invest our time
3. Kids do not need to be involved in everything
4. This may require changing our desires regarding jobs and expenses
5. There is no other way off the hamster wheel!

C. Communion - Our Table of Simple Freedom

1. A simple table - nothing is complex here!
2. A simple table of freedom - here we feast on Jesus
3. Look away from other things and look to Him alone
4. Come and receive rest for your souls

The Freedom of Simplicity

Luke 10:38-42

January 4, 2015

Communion

Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: anxiety and worry, biblical characters, contentment, passion for Christ, self-control, meditation and silence

The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26

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