

Theme: True abundance is not found in a life full of distractions but in one that has reduced activities to allow time to listen to Jesus speak.

I. America - The Culture of More

- A. America believes more and bigger is always better
- B. We are a culture of maximum choices and super size!
- C. We are a culture of busy, non-stop activities - the more, the better; this is a full life!
- D. But is more always better - or sometimes is less more?
- E. For the next 2 weeks we will look at the idea of less is more, and the importance of rhythms to prepare for Lent

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 the 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 Mary and Martha

1. Quiet focus vs. noisy activity

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... Luke 10:39-41

- a. Mary quietly sits at Lord's feet with quiet focus on one thing
 - b. Martha is full of noisy activity and tries to fit Jesus around these other activities
2. Peaceful rest vs. worried uproar
- She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said...⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things... Luke 10:39, 41
- a. Mary is a picture of peace and rest
 - b. Martha is a picture of tense worry and uproar
 - 1. Worried - noun 17x in NT - can mean attentive, but usually worried, anxious - Martha is anxious
 - 2. Upset - only time as a verb - 12x as a noun - usually commotion, uproar, confusion
 - 3. Her inward state is worried about so many things so her outward activity is confusion and bustle
3. Quiet listening vs. anxious commanding
- 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!" Luke 10:39-40
- a. Mary is listening to what God says
 - b. Martha is telling God what she thinks and what He should do!
 - c. This is the end result of too many distractions: we stop listening to what God says and start telling Him what He needs to do.

4. One thing vs. many things

“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

- a. Mary’s attention is focused with laser precision on one thing, while Martha’s attention is scattered among many things.
- b. This is the root of Mary’s peace and Martha’s worried uproar, of Mary’s ability to quietly listen, and Martha’s anxious questioning and commanding God.

C. A tale of two sisters

Martha	Mary
Distracted, noisy activity	Quiet focus
Worried & upset	Peaceful rest
Anxious questioning of God & commanding Him	Quiet listening to hear from God
Many things	One thing

- 1. They are very different at this point!
- 2. Which one better describes our culture?
- 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... Luke 10:38, 40

- 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 second greatest commandment! (Luke 10:27-28)
- 4. She is loving her neighbor like the Good Samaritan! (Luke 10:30-37)
- 5. So what is the problem? Why does Luke include this story?

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. Am I more like Martha or Mary right now?

1. All of us can struggle with this from time to time!
2. Like Martha, we can't find time - too much to do!
3. We will have time later - but later never comes!
4. Most of the things we do are not sinful - but they are not the most important thing!
5. Like Martha, we become filled with anxiety & commotion
6. Sometimes I even stay busy so I don't have to quietly listen to Jesus - I am afraid of what He might say!
7. Do I think I am more like Martha or Mary?

B. Where has the good crowded out the best in my life?

1. In 10 days Lent begins - a time of "less is more"
2. This is not about traditionalism or dead ritualism!
3. Some of the ancient practices and rhythms have great wisdom
4. Ask the Lord this week - what "good" things could I cut out for 40 days to give me more time and focus to sit at Jesus' feet? Some possibilities:
 - a. Social media
 - b. TV, Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, etc.
 - c. Listening to the radio in the car
 - d. Reading or watching the news

5. How will I try to grow in sitting with Jesus?

- a. More time in the Word - read one or more Gospels
- b. More time in prayer
- c. Coming to the gathering every Sunday
- d. Reading a book to help you grow in the faith

6. I will talk more about this next week

C. Communion - Our Table With Christ

1. A simple table - nothing is complex here!
2. Here less is truly more!
3. Look away from other things and look to Him alone
4. Come and commune with Your Lord

When Less Is More

Luke 10:38-42

February 4, 2024

Communion

Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: meditation and silence; passion for Christ; anxiety and worry, biblical characters, contentment

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

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!"

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