

Luke 10:38-42 Take time to sit with Jesus! Pentecost 9 August 8, 11, 2019

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God shows us His grace and peace in Jesus Christ to serve us that we may serve others. Amen.

We read the Gospel lesson from Luke 10:38-42

These are your words heavenly Father. Please, serve us that we may better serve you. Your Word – truth!

Dear Christians, called to serve,

Last week, our lesson was about the Good Samaritan and how he showed his love as a neighbor by helping someone. This week we want to talk about the proper motivation for serving. We'll see in Martha a woman who got frustrated and discouraged because she got her priorities mixed up about Jesus. How do we stay motivated to serve God and each other as God wants us to serve? How can we make sure we are following God's priorities for our lives?

Take time to sit with Jesus!

First, we sit as Jesus' students. A sign of true discipleship is giving full attention to God's Word. Jesus did this! When He was a young child, He sat and learned in the synagogue as teachers read and taught from the Old Testament. When He was 12, He went to the temple in Jerusalem and sat in the courtyard classrooms to discuss God's Word with teachers and amazed them with His questions. As an adult, it was Jesus' custom to go to the local synagog to worship, to read the Scripture when asked and teach the people. If Jesus spent time in God's Word all His life, how much more we need God's Word to prepare us for service!

We are blessed to have many ways to learn God's Word! We start as young children with simple Bible story books and Christian songs. We have Sunday School, Christian Day School, and Bible classes. We have devotional books. We can listen to podcasts or see videos of the life of Jesus. We have hymns based on God's Word. All these help us to learn from Jesus and motivate us to serve.

Think of Jesus' prayer life. He was often up early each day to pray. Before He did miracles, like feeding the 5,000, He said a prayer to His heavenly Father. When Jesus faced a crisis, like in Gethsemane before His death, He poured out His heart in prayer. When Jesus had to make decisions, like choosing His 12 disciples, He prayed. While Jesus was being tempted in the wilderness, He fasted and prayed. What was the first temptation from the devil in the wilderness? He said, "*If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread*" (Matthew 4:3).

What did Jesus answer? "*It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'*" (Matthew 4:4). There is a time for food and a time for spiritual food. We can see how Jesus' words fit the lesson of Mary and Martha. There is a time to serve with our hands and a time to listen with our ears. Mary set her priority to be God's Word.

Jesus had His priorities, too. When He arrived at Martha's home, He didn't go lie down to rest. He didn't wait until after the meal to speak. He began teaching immediately, knowing that there could be later interruptions. He wanted to reach as many people as often as possible with the truths of God. It wasn't just with Mary and Martha. Another time Jesus talked with a Samaritan woman at a well. He started by asking her for water. That led to Jesus speaking about her life of sin, and that He had come as the Savior to forgive her and give her a new life! As far as I know, Jesus never got water from her that hot day. He didn't eat either. The disciples had been in town buying food. When they returned, they offered Him food. But He refused saying, "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.... Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest*" (John 4:34-35). For Jesus, whenever the opportunity came for Him to speak God's Word, it was His first priority to do it!

Second, we are to balance sitting with serving. Jesus said, *“Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but one thing is needed. In fact, Mary has chosen that better part, which will not be taken away from her”* (v.41-42). Martha served to honor Jesus. He never called her serving bad. But she had two problems. First she was anxious about the preparations. Would there be enough food? Was there room for everyone to eat? These were good questions. But, Martha’s worry kept her from answering a bigger question. Why had Jesus come to her house? Was it to be served or to serve? The answer is both! But, which came first? Jesus first spoke to give them a spiritual feast! The meal would follow. Second, Martha got distracted. She got so upset that she interrupted Jesus’ teaching: *“Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me”* (v.40). Martha was doing much to accomplish little! She believed in Jesus, but without taking time to listen, she was not focused on the best thing for her.

Martha was like a member of a high school band, so focused on playing her instrument she didn’t follow the director. The result was noise instead of harmonized music! How often have we found ourselves doing the same thing in life? We get so busy that we don’t take time to seek God’s blessing on our day. We are so rushed we don’t use God’s set of priorities for our lives. We may wonder why we feel burned out in serving the Lord. Like Martha, we’re not connecting to the source of power!

Mary wasn’t perfect, but she put first things first. Jesus said that she had the one thing needed. She was listening to His Word! To sit with Jesus is to learn what the Bible teaches. When it tells us we are sinning, we take it to heart and stop. When it tells us that Jesus forgives us, we trust His promise and have peace. But even with the best of intentions like Martha, we get distracted from the Word. How quickly we forget what God teaches us! By lunch time today, how many of us will be able to say what the sermon was about? How about by breakfast tomorrow? God’s Word should change us in what we think and do!

Jesus wants all of us to remember that there is a time to sit and a time to serve! First, be served by Jesus. I once read: *“Martha lived for Jesus! Mary lived in Jesus!”* Martha served without God’s power. Mary served as the Lord gave her strength. The *“one thing needed”* connects us to Jesus. The more time we take to seek His kingdom, His forgiveness, and guidance in His Word, the more He will accomplish through us. Jesus promised, *“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it”* (Luke 11:28). Peter wrote, *“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good”* (1 Peter 2:2-3). Paul wrote, *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength”* (Philippians 4:13).

So, when we want to serve the Lord and His people, let’s start with Jesus serving us. His Word tells us that He gave His life to forgive our sins of doubt, worry, and lack of motivation to serve. Jesus lived, died, and rose to life to give us a perfect life in heaven where we will fully serve Him for eternity. Let us trust in Him! Seek His strength and blessing. And out of thanks, gladly serve the Lord and His people! Amen.