

Sitting at the feet of Jesus!

Luke 10: 38-42

“³⁸As 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 few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Can you believe that? Mary was found sitting at the feet of Jesus and that bothered Martha. Should it have bothered Martha? ***What does it mean to sit at the feet of Jesus?*** Growing up I have heard that expression many times, ***“Sitting at the feet of Jesus.”*** ***But what does that mean when someone says that? Is sitting at His feet appropriate, or, a waste of time?*** And if it is appropriate, how often and how long should we do it? As we examine this story today, I want us to consider these and perhaps other questions as we determine what it means for us to sit at Jesus’ feet.

In a world, where time is money and money is considered power, spending time doing what appears to be nothing, could be considered ***“like a less than productive activity.”*** But let me state this right now, sitting at the feet of Jesus, is never something foolish, nor is it a waste of time.

Illustration:

An old sailor, who lived in Scotland, was known by all as a devout Christian. On various occasions, he spent an entire day speaking with students. He would bemoan the fact that the people of Scotland were so reluctant to turn to God.

*Once, as he was speaking, he stood up, looked across the expanse of water, and proclaimed, **“But some day they will do it. They will believe. They will trust in God. They will accept Christ, and they will get the power. I dream of that day and the great things that shall be.”***

*The students asked the old sailor, **“What great things?”** The old man answered, **“We shall have another race in Scotland, new men and women, and they shall build a better country and see a lovelier day.”***

Sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening, learning and praying, will help us find those NEW Men and Women the old sailor was speaking of. It will, significantly, help build a better country and world, and we will indeed all see a lovelier day!

Let’s look at this story in Luke for just a moment...

First - The opening of her home

“³⁸As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.”

As Jesus was traveling from one town to the next, he enters the town where Martha & Mary lived. In the King James version it says, ***“Martha received them into her home...”*** In the NIV version it says, ***“Martha opened her home to Him.”*** Although the NIV suggests that she opened her home to Jesus alone, most likely He would have been traveling with His disciples as well. He also would have been tired, thirsty and hungry, so Martha opens her home to Jesus and all who traveled with Him to provide the various things He needed.

The village Bethany was not that far outside of Jerusalem. As Jesus traveled throughout the area, having no place of His own, little or no funds to purchase anything, He often stayed with friends or families in those areas. In this case, there were some close friends He stayed with, Mary and Martha. It was often referred to as Martha’s house, because most likely she was a widow and thus the owner and housekeeper. She was also known to be generous and had the gift of hospitality. She used her gifts well as the Lord called her to.

As the work of Jesus continues in this world today, I wonder where He would stay? Is there an open house for Him to come into? Oh, we might say YES, rather quickly, ***“Stay with me”*** but keep in mind He didn’t travel alone. ***Are we ready to offer whatever it takes when it is needed? “Are our hearts ready to receive Jesus? Are we ready to receive His teaching, His Word, and allow the Word of God to change us?”***

Everywhere he went, taught and stayed, lives were changed. So, is the door OPEN, really OPEN, in our homes? It is easy to say ***“YES”*** but perhaps we should think about what we are doing?

Illustration:

A school teacher injured his back and had to wear a plaster cast, around the upper part of his body for some time. It fit under his shirt and was barely noticeable.

*On the first day of the term, still with the cast under his shirt, he found himself assigned to the toughest students in school. Walking confidently into the rowdy classroom, he opened the window as wide as possible, and then busied himself with desk work. When a strong breeze made his tie flap back and forth, he grabbed the stapler off his desk and stapled the tie to his chest. **He had no trouble with discipline the rest of that term.***

As we are molded, shaped and formed by the cast of God placed in our lives, we can walk, work and do what the Lord asks of us with confidence. However, ***“Are willing to open our lives, our hearts and minds? Will we do whatever it takes to accomplish what the Lord places before us as we follow Him?”*** Are we willing to deal with the toughest kids in the school, so to speak?

Martha opened her home, as she had already opened her life, for Jesus and all who needed her house that day. Will we open our homes, our hearts to Jesus, completely? That is the key, opening the door of our lives completely.

Second - Busyness

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!"

I think I can say, fairly confidently, that most of our lives are filled with all kinds of busy work. Mine can be, and often is. How about yours? Many of us have allowed things, or tasks, even self-imposed duties, to rob us of the time we need to spend with God. I mean, Martha was cleaning, preparing, cooking, doing all the "right things," according to the normal etiquette, but she didn't have time to be with Jesus because she was too busy.

Now, considering it was Martha's home, and she was most likely a widow, she was left with the home to take care of, which is a lot of work, so, that may be understandable, right? So, she would have felt, "***I have to make certain everything is in order.***" Many of you know what I am talking about.

I mean, guests are coming. So, we do the cleaning, cleaning, cleaning, and re-cleaning, until everything is just so. Put the stuff away that has been sitting out for some time, dust, do the wash, all the chores we didn't do earlier, most likely because many of us feel we are over worked.

Jesus arrives at the house and Martha, being the great and gracious hostess she is, begins some final straightening up. She looks over at Mary, and starts getting mad at her, her sister. She tells her to get busy and help her. Mary being the normal sister she was, ignores her, or, at the very least, maybe starts to dust, and then simply sits down at the feet of Jesus, to listen and speak with Him. Martha, being a little upset, speaks to Jesus, "***Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all of the work by myself? Tell her to help me.***" (v.40)

Does that sound like something you might have heard in some of our homes?

I can just see the smile on Jesus' face as He says, "***Martha, Martha, Martha...***" I wonder, how many Martha's do we have in this world today? ***I would bet, a lot.*** We fill our lives with all kinds of "***important things***" to do, and then find ourselves wondering "***how can I get them all done?***" The simple answer, we can't get everything done in time, because there are simply too many tasks to do. In our eyes, everything we are doing is of the "***greatest***" importance. So they all need to be done, even if it is impossible.

Jesus said in Mark,

"What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?" MAR 8:36

It is quoted again in Luke, but with a slightly different perspective,

"What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" LUK 9:25

We gain, we get, we have, and yet, we lose! We work so hard, yet, we still lose...

We lose our peace...

We lose our comfort...

We lose our families...

We lose our health... If we do not change, possibly we lose our souls...

Have we ever really stopped to consider what we are giving up by making our lives so busy?

The truth is, we often take upon ourselves more than anyone else expects, or demands.

It is called "***BUSYNESS!***"

Now, don't misunderstand me, there are daily duties we all need to accomplish, yet, some of what we take upon ourselves could wait for another time or day? The sad part of all this is, when we discover that our lives are too busy, ***often what we remove are the wrong things, and often we have removed the things of God.***

There is nothing valuable enough in this world worth losing our peace, comfort, health or family, let alone our souls. Lord, speak to us, open our hearts to receive you, and to remove the busyness, that clutters up our lives, which we have made a higher priority than sitting at Your feet to listen and pray.

Here are some of the things which I think help make our lives to busy...

Things that help create busyness, and are EVIDENCE YOU LIVE IN THE YEAR 2023

- 1. You just tried to enter your password, for the fifteenth time, on the microwave.
- 2. You have a list of fifteen phone numbers to reach your family of three.
- 3. You call your son's cell to let him know it's time to eat. He e-mails you back from his bedroom, "What's for dinner?"
- 4. You chat several times a day with a stranger from South Africa, but you haven't spoken with your next-door neighbor for weeks or even months.
- 5. Your grandmother asks you to send her a JPEG picture file of your newborn, so she can create a new screen saver.
- 6. You pull up in your own driveway, and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home.
- 7. You buy a computer and 6 months later it's out of date, so you sell it for half the price you paid, so you can buy another one.
- 8. Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't have the first twenty, thirty or forty years of your life, is cause for panic, and then, turning around to go get it, makes you even more upset.
- 9. Using real money, instead of credit or debit card, to make a purchase would be a hassle and take planning.
- 10. Cleaning up the dining room means getting the fast-food bags out of the back seat of your car.
- 11. Your reason for not staying in touch with family is, that they don't have e-mail addresses.
- 12. Your dining room table is now your flat filing cabinet.
- 13. Your idea of being organized is multiple-colored Post-it Notes.
- 14. You hear most of your jokes via e-mail or online instead of in person.
- 15. You get an extra phone line so you can get phone calls.

- 16. Right now, you're thinking how true all of this is.
- 17. Even worse, you're probably going to forward some of this to someone else. And yes, I may have just forwarded this to some of you.

Technology has in its own way to make our lives busier. Thus, it is time to prioritize our lives...

What good is it for us to be so busy, that we forgo doing the best things, things which bring joy, peace and strength in life?

Third - What would Jesus do?

As you read this story, Martha is complaining to Jesus, so, what is Jesus' response to her?

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

If you must give up something, do not give up your time with God. Do not give up our time with Jesus. In fact, Jesus told her, ***"Mary has chosen that which is better."***

Actually, Jesus was telling those of us who read this story today, "Make time for Him. Time alone with God. Frequent and without interruption."

If things need to be re-arranged, get rid of some of the worldly things, things which will, in the long run, make little or no difference to our souls, or, the souls of our families.

Illustration:

*I remember a friend whose mother kept saying to her son, "Everything in moderation." She applied that to her relationship with God as well. Thus, she had little or no relationship with the Lord. Can we truly ever have too much of God in our lives? I believe our Lord tells us that we cannot. We will never have too much of His love, His peace, His wisdom, His guidance in lives. Jesus told to us, ***"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and everything else will be added unto us..."*** (Matt 6:33)*

What is it Jesus would never give up today?

- I don't believe He would give up worship on the Lord's day.
- I don't believe Jesus would give up spending time with His Father.
- I do not believe Jesus would ever give up reading the Word.
- I don't believe He would stop helping others in need, no matter how much time it may take.
- I don't believe He would be disobedient to His Father's will or ignore a calling for His life.

What would Jesus give up?

•Thing which we as humans, seem to hold on to, with all our might, yet, in the end they will benefit us little or nothing. The list is endless...

"Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (v.42)

Have we chosen what is better?

I came across a poem, which is related to this subject of busyness, it goes like this:

"It's a gift to be simple,

It's a gift to be free,

It's a gift to come down where we ought to be,

*And when we see ourselves in a way that's right,
we will live in a valley of love and delight!*

*When true simplicity is gained,
to live and to love,
we will not be ashamed,
To turn and to turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning,
We turn 'round right."*

What are we doing, and why are we doing it?

Is all of the busyness really needed?

Let's stop, and turn around a few times, and examine our motives, our purpose, and our priorities for everything we are currently doing?

Are they what Jesus would want us to do?

- The Opening of her home- is your heart open
- Busyness - Is there too much stuff blocking your walk
- What would Jesus do - He would remove the world, not the things of God...