

Deciding Between Good things and Better Things **Luke 10:38-42 (Nov 25, 2018 at FBCW)**

INTRO. In Warner Robins, Georgia – right after my parents built the home where my brother and I grew up – we had this certain family that always popped in. They never called, they never gave us notice, we never knew when they were coming. But frequently, this family just popped in: Weeknights, weekends, it didn't matter. They loved to stop by and hang out. We had this inside joke as a family, we called them the “Dew Drops” – it stood for dropping by. The Dew Drops. We never knew when they were coming...but they'd drop by soon enough.

- When they dropped in: my parents felt an obligation to entertain.
- I'll never forget the look on my parent's faces when my brother called this family “The Dew Drops” to their face. They had this bewildered look. We were so embarrassed.

Background of Luke 10. This is toward the beginning of Luke's travel narrative. Luke is chronicling the journey of Jesus to the cross. Much of Jesus most important teaching occurs here in this narrative that began at Luke 9:51 with the phrase, “*Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem.*”

The “Travel Narrative” as this section is often called, is really just a summary of Jesus teaching His disciples/followers how to live.

- Jesus is basically telling them, “*After the cross, when I'm gone...live intentionally pursuing the matters I've taught you about.*”

It's interesting – Jesus starts his teaching by acknowledging that a Disciple's life is busy. You can be lots of things as a Christian, but one thing Jesus never allows is laziness, sloth, or apathy. Disciples of Jesus are busy doing Jesus' work!

Luke 9:57-62

- I'll follow you wherever you go → Foxes have holes, birds have nests...
- I'll follow you, but let me go bury my father → Dead bury dead; proclaim the KOG...
- I'll follow you, let me say farewell at home → Hand to plow and looks back, unworthy!

Luke 10:1-12

- Jesus sends out 72 disciples, and he sends them in pairs, two by two.
- Harvest is plentiful...laborers are few...pray for God to raise up workers!
- Jesus promised to provide everything as they worked. They must trust in Him.

Luke 10:25-37

- Parable of the Good Samaritan
- A lawyer said, “What is eternal life” and “And who is my neighbor?”
- Jesus tells an unthinkable story of a hated Samaritan loving a broken Jew!

The Point → A disciple of Jesus is busy! Whether stepping out in faith...or doing missions in a foreign city...or reaching out to a hurting neighbor that looks nothing like you – a disciple's life is a busy, full life!

But the story of Luke 10:38-42 quickly lets us know that being busy is not necessarily the best goal. Sure...God expects us to be busy...but busyness at the expense of personal time with the Lord is simply unacceptable.

Today's Text: The Story of Jesus dropping by the Home of Martha and Mary (vv 38-42).

Luke 10:38 → On his trip to Jerusalem, Jesus stops in the village of Bethany. He is confident his friends Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus will welcome him and the disciples into their home. John 11-12 lets us know Jesus had a close friendship with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.

- The home is referred to as Martha's home.
- She is probably the homeowner and the oldest of the sisters.

Luke 10:39-40 → immediately Luke frames the contrast between Martha and Mary.

Martha – very busy serving...feels the obligation/responsibility of entertaining...likely in the kitchen trying to prepare a meal.

- Can you hear her thinking, "*Poor Jesus...busy traveling...hasn't had a homecooked meal in a while.*"
- Can you hear the kitchen door swinging as she goes back and forth from preparing the food and checking on the guests?
- She's distracted by the many things!
- "Distracted" = pulled away, unable to do the main thing.

Mary – quietly and attentively sitting at the Lord's feet. She is listening to the Lord's teaching. She is unconcerned with helping her sister.

Martha – becomes so exasperated by all the details of serving/work that she goes up to Jesus and gruffly says, "Jesus...do you not care I'm working all by myself? My sister is doing nothing. Tell her to come help me!"

Jesus – "Martha, Martha..."

- "You are worried about all sorts of things!" = You are stressed.
- One this is all that's necessary!
- Mary has chosen the one thing that matters most.
- I'm not going to take it away from her.

Note, Jesus doesn't harshly scold Martha. He doesn't rebuke Martha. He doesn't tell her that she's totally wrong.

- She was doing good things.
- But she missed the most important thing!

BIG IDEA. You can prioritize busyness, or you can prioritize worship. But you cannot prioritize both.

Hear me on this – I am not saying busyness is wrong. The first thing God told Adam to do in the Garden of Eden was to work (name the animals, tend the garden).

- Work and busyness are good things!
- But all of our work/effort/busyness that doesn't flow from the personal realization that we are empty and helpless without Christ is futile.

Luke 10 is a picture of the disciples working (72 going out, Good Samaritan) – but the story of Martha and Mary reminds us our work is meaningless and empty if personal time with the Lord is not our top priority.

Can you just hear the Lord – *“Martha, you are concerned about a lot...but ONE THING is necessary...”*

- The One Big Thing is being close with Jesus – and how many of us are missing it?

FACTS

First, the primary calling on my life is not activity; it is intimacy!

- When busyness hinders godliness and intimacy with Christ...my priorities must be re-evaluated.
- Mary took the initiative to be near Jesus!
 - Mary sat at the Lord's feet = reflexive word → she sat herself beside, she found herself the seat.
 - FACT: the disciple who reflects on Jesus' teaching receives a meal that is never removed.
- Interestingly enough, Mary is heralded as the wise one in this story, and she never says a word (2016...silent).

****Question:** How do we know we love God? By remaining devoted to His Word in the midst of life's demands.

Second, in America, we seem addicted to busyness. But busyness doesn't equal godliness, effectiveness, or fulfillment.

(ILLUS: Joey King at Rotary, tells kids – *“Don't confuse activity with achievement”*).

- Notice how we've moved from answering the phone, “Nothing” to “Busy.”
- Remember when kids used to get bored?
- Remember when on a long trip all you could do was look out the window?

****Discipleship** sometimes requires that tasks be suspended so fellowship can be maintained.

**The point is not that activity like Martha's is bad. The choice Jesus is discussing with Martha is between something that is good and something that is better.

Third, grace knows no boundaries! Regardless of your past, your gender, your sin – Jesus will teach and change all who come to Him!

- No first century Jewish rabbi would ever teach a woman. Women were strictly forbidden from being in the teaching assembly.
- The openness of Jesus to cross gender/social barriers is instructive for us!
 - Don't let social barriers become obstacles for potential ministry!

Fourth, let's worry less about others (like Martha) and more about our own heart (like Mary).

- We think we know what others need.
- But we have enough trouble with our own hearts!
- Don't assume –
 - They should be committed to SS, choir, this field like "me"
 - "If other CHRs were good they would be like me"

FACT: Martha's attitude, unchecked, can destroy the inner soul of service!

FACT: we ruin our service when we overestimate our importance.

Fifth, life is very short. Choose your priorities carefully, prayerfully, and deliberately.

- Life won't automatically arrange itself with the proper priorities.
- We have 1000 daily choices – but if you miss sitting daily at JC's feet – you are wrong!

Note – if you are involved in something that takes you away from 1) Christ 2) your family 3) wholehearted support of your church 4) hurts your testimony to the lost – maybe you should get rid of it!

CONCL. Remember – Jesus doesn't really need anything from you. You are invited to participate in His kingdom (not the other way around). What Jesus can give you is so much more important than what you can give Him!

- Martha, have you forgot Jesus turns water into wine, and takes loaves and fishes and feeds thousands → quit stressing about the meal!
- Have you forgotten Jesus promises us rest?
- Have you forgotten that Jesus said there's a time to work/fast after He's gone – but there is NO substitute for being in His presence?
- Listen – study the book of Revelation – Jesus is the one preparing for us the meal! It's called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!