

“MARY OF BETHANY”

Text: Luke 10:38-42

Subject: The Spiritual Power Of Solitude And Silence In Your Life

Introduction

Fact: If the devil can't make you too bad, he will make you too busy.

Fact: If the devil can't keep you from serving God, he will hurry your pace so that you do not enjoy your very service to God.

Fact: If the devil can keep us from solitude and silence, (where we allow God to become the center of our being) we will then become slaves to the expectations of others instead of God.

(Is It That Important?)

“I am sure you sense the desperate need for *Unceasing Prayer* in our day. We pant through an endless series of activities with scattered minds and noisy hearts. We feel strained, hurried, and breathless. Thoughts dart in and out of our minds with no rhyme or reason. Seldom can we focus on a single thing for long. Everything and anything interrupt our sense of concentration. **We are a distracted people**” (Richard Foster, Pg. 121 of, “Prayer Treasury”)

◆ **(Remember Karl Jung's Words) “Hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil”**

The Setting Of Our Text

“Now it came to pass, as they went, that Jesus entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house”. (v. 38)

Question: Where was Jesus going?

Answer: He was entering the village of Bethany.

- ◆ Bethany was a suburb, 2 miles outside of Jerusalem.
- ◆ It was located on the eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives.
- ◆ Bethany was called the “House of Misery” because of the invalids who congregated there.

Question: Who was Martha?

Answer: Martha was a woman Jesus thought much of. (John 11:5)

“Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus”

Question: What was Martha Like?

#1. **She was unselfish:**

- ◆ She owned a large house, big enough to lodge Jesus and His disciples.

#2. **She was fearless:**

- ◆ She associated with Jesus when it was now dangerous and unpopular:
 - #1. The authorities were seeking to kill Jesus. (John 7:25)
 - #2. Disciples had forsaken Jesus. (John 5:66)
 - #3. Others were now speaking against Jesus. (John 7:20; 43-44)
 - #4. His own family rejected Jesus. (John 7:3-5)

(But Martha had the courage to let the world know of her devotion to Jesus)

#3. **She was a giver:**

- ◆ Martha was taking care of her younger sister Mary and her brother, Lazarus.
- ◆ For some unknown reason, Martha was caring for her family members.

Question: Who was this hostess Martha?

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- #1. An **unselfish** woman, hosting Jesus.
- #2. A **fearless** woman, publicly devoted.
- #3. A **giver**, taking care of Mary and Lazarus.

Question: Pastor, why did Jesus go to her house?

Question: And what is the message to my heart today?

(A Message From The Meal In Bethany)

I. The Devotion Of Mary (V. 39)

“And Martha had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word”

Question: Who was Martha’s sister?

Answer: Mary

Question: What was Mary doing?

Answer: (v. 39) “Which sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His Word”

- #1. She was **sitting** (and) #2. She was **listening**

Fact: 3 times, Mary of Bethany is seen in Scriptures:

- #1. In John 11:32 (Sharing her burden **at the feet of Jesus**)
- #2. In John 12:3 (Pouring out her worship **at the feet of Jesus**)
- #3. In Luke 10:39 (Listening to the Word **at the feet of Jesus**)

Question: Where was Mary living?

Answer: “At the feet of Jesus”

Question: What’s the big deal here?

Answer: The big deal is:

- ◆ In First Century Judaism, it was highly unusual for a woman to be accepted by a teacher as a disciple.
- ◆ But Jesus overcomes every objection and obstacle, (and swings the door wide open, as He invites you and me to come in and sit down).

Question: Why was Mary so devoted and so received by Jesus?

(2 Reasons)

#1. She was **humble** (she sat at Jesus’ feet)

- ◆ The room was large enough for a crowd.
- ◆ She could have chosen to sit in the back, off to the side, or in a high seat somewhere.
- ◆ But Mary’s devotion and humility ran deep enough to take the low road.
- ◆ It is the only way I can make progress with God (To humble myself before His Lordship and Authority).

#2. She was **hungry** (she wanted to hear Jesus’ Words)

- ◆ The phrase “And heard His Word” (Means:)
 - #1. She was attentive
 - #2. She was listening
 - #3. She was concentrating
 - #4. She was hungering for more of the Word
- ◆ Spiritual hunger always includes 3 things:
 - #1. And eagerness to **hear** the Word of God!
 - #2. A desire to **surrender** to the Word we hear!
 - #3. An obedience to **do** (live) the Word of God!

II. The Distraction Of Martha (Vs. 40-41)

(V. 40) “But Martha was **cumbered** about much serving”

Question: Pastor, what does it mean to be “**cumbered**” about much serving?

Answer: The Greek word for “**cumbered**” is (PERIESPATO). (Which means:)

- #1. To draw around
- #2. To twist

- #3. To be drawn here and there
- #4. To be distracted

(The Idea Here Is:)

- ◆ That Martha was drawn around and twisted up inside with anxiousness and worry.
- ◆ She was running here and running there.
- ◆ She was drawn away by this person and that person.
- ◆ She was distracted from her first priority in life, ministry to Jesus (not for Jesus).

#1. Martha was **distracted** and #2. Martha was **disappointed**

(V. 40) “Lord, don’t you even care that Mary has left me alone; tell her to get over here right now to help me” (Resentment creeps in)

- #1. She gets **distracted** (and the result is),
- #2. She gets **disappointed** and aggravated and critical of someone else. (Mary)

Question: What happens whenever we get out of order on the inside?

Answer: We lose our sweetness on the outside. (Remember:)

- ◆ It is injured people who injure others!

Question: What does Jesus say to Martha in (v. 41)?

Answer: “Martha, Martha”

- ◆ “Martha, Martha” here is a tender reply despite Martha’s failure.

Question: What happens whenever we get distracted from the feet of Jesus?

(V. 41) (Two things, says Jesus) #1. “Thou are **careful**” (and) #2. Thou art “**troubled**”

#1. The word “**Careful**” is the Greek word (MERIMNAO) which means: **anxious**.

(It Means:)

- #1. To worry,
- #2. To be anxious,
- #3. To be inwardly torn and divided in two,
- #4. To be distracted from what your mind should be focused upon.

#2. The word “**troubled**” is the Greek word (TURBAZO) which means:

- #1. To be disturbed
- #2. To be agitated
- #3. To be in turmoil
- #4. To be stirred up
- #5. To be ruffled

Question: What was the root cause of Martha’s anxiousness and disturbance?

Answer: She was distracted from what Mary was doing.

Question: What was Mary doing?

Answer: Sitting at the feet of Jesus!!!

- ◆ Drinking more
- ◆ Filling up
- ◆ Soaking in
- ◆ Coming close

III. The Directions Of Jesus

Question: What did Jesus say to Martha and you and me? (3 things in v. 42)

- #1. “One thing is needful”
- #2. “Mary has chosen that good part”
- #3. “I’m not telling her to move”

Fact: The problem was not that Martha had too much work to do.

Fact: The problem was that she allowed her work to **interfere** with her worship.

(The Result Was)

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- ◆ She was “**distracted**” on the outside (and) ◆ She was “**pulled apart**” on the inside.

Question: What is Jesus saying to us all?

Answer: “**One thing is needful**” above every other thing in your life and mine. (What is it?)

- ◆ **Remove** what interferes with your ministry at the feet of Jesus.
- ◆ **Renew** the altar that will leave you with a peaceful calm.
- ◆ **Return** again to your highest priority (of solitude and silence before God).
- ◆ **Resolve** (that from now on) nothing and no one will rob you of God’s intention for a healthy, spirit-filled, non-disturbed, rested soul. (Obtained at Jesus’ feet)

The Journey Inward and the Journey Outward Is Biblical (For a balanced life)

#1. **The Pentateuch** (Genesis-Deuteronomy)

- ◆ **Israel:** “Hear O Israel, love the Lord with all your heart, soul and might” (Deut 6:4)
(Inward) “And Love Your Neighbor As Yourself” (Lev. 19:18) (Outward)
- ◆ **Levites:** “Chosen by God for Himself” (Private) and given by God for service.
(Public)

#2. **Historical Books** (Joshua- Esther)

- ◆ **Samuel:** “And the child ministered unto the Lord” (I Samuel 3:1) (Private)
“And Samuel grew and the Lord let none of his words fall to the ground”
(I Samuel 3:19) (Public)
- ◆ **David:** “So David shepherded Israel according to the integrity of his heart” (Inward)
“And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands (Psalm 78:72) (Outward)”
- ◆ **Elijah:** “Go hide yourself” (I Kings 17) - private
“Go shew yourself” (I Kings 18) – public

#3. **Poetical Books** (Job – Song of Solomon)

- ◆ **Job** (How to suffer)
- ◆ **Psalms** (How to worship)
- ◆ **Proverbs** (How to think)
- ◆ **Ecclesiastes** (How to live)
- ◆ **Song of Solomon** (How to love)

#4. **Major Prophets** (Isaiah – Daniel)

- ◆ **Isaiah** “Take root downward (private) and bear fruit upward (public)”. (Isaiah 37:31)
- ◆ **Jeremiah:** “I search the heart and try the reins (inward) to give every man according to the fruit of his doings (outward). (Jeremiah 17:10)

#5. **Minor Prophets** (Hosea – Malachi)

- ◆ **Joel:** “Rend your heart (private) and not your garments (public). (Joel 2:13)

(New Testament)

#1. **Jesus:**

- ◆ “In the solitary place of prayer” (private) Mark 1:35.
- ◆ “Gathering with the apostles” (public) Mark 6:30

#2. **Acts:** “Ye shall receive power (internal) and be my witnesses (external)” Acts 1:8

#3. **Epistles:**

- ◆ **Ephesians** – Chapters 1-3 doctrine (internal)
Chapters 4-6 practice (external)

◆ **Timothy:**

“Take heed to yourself (private) for in doing this you will save yourself and them that hear thee” (Public) I Timothy 4:16

We Just Can't Escape It

(That God Wants To Grow Our Souls First)

- ◆ “Sanctify yourselves today (private) and tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you (public)”. Joshua 3:5
- ◆ “Moses, be to the people Godward first (private) then go out and train the leaders, (public)”. Exodus 18:18
- ◆ “Wait on the Lord (private) then run and not be weary (public)”. Isaiah 40:31
- ◆ “Uzziah sought the Lord, (private) and God helped him against the Philistines (public)”. II Chronicles 26:5

Lord Teach Us This...

- #1... That solitude shows us how to let our behavior be shaped (not by the compulsions of the world) but by our new mind of Christ.
- #2... That silence prevents us from being suffocated by the noisy world and prepares us to inwardly hear what God is saying to us.

Let's Journey Inward And Possess...

- #1... That inner calm that frees us from all push and shove to get ahead.
- #2... That inner discipline which brings heavenly manna that nourishes the soul.
- #3... That inner contentment which frees us from all insecurity, competition and, intimidation.
- #4... That inner discernment that allows us to eliminate excessive clutter from our lives.
- #5... That inner strength which frees us from having to be first, be big, be known and controlling.
- #6... That inner rest that allows God to defend what's worth defending.
- #7... That inner ability to enjoy a quiet life in the midst of a hurried world.

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

P.S. “The less we are manipulated by the expectations of others, the more we are open to the expectations of God”. (Richard Foster)