

CHOOSING THE BEST Luke 10:38-42

A Goal for the New Year

New Year's Resolutions

In Luke 10:38-42, Jesus deals with the SUPERIORITY OF LOVE to SERVICE.

Jesus' followers need to know that **loving Him and hearing His Word is more important than keeping busy serving Him.**

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to die. 9:51-19:27

Along the way He is already smelling the bitter odor of rejection in the air. As he travels, they make one last stop at Bethany, a few short miles away from Jerusalem, where He was going to die.

The effectiveness of the ministry of the apostles Jesus had sent out had caused Christ to reflect on the privilege received by those who had chosen to follow Him:

Love and trust are the primary bases of their relationship with Him.

They are superior–

To intelligence 10:21-24

To ritual 10:25-37

In the midst of this dialogue, Jesus arrives at the home of friends in Bethany–Martha, Mary and their brother, Lazarus.

To service 10:38-42

Jesus had already spoken to the religious leaders, who were still depending on their ritualistic observances for their relationship with God, –to them he emphasized the importance of service resulting from LOVE.

Now Jesus directs a clarification to His followers.

Love motivated service was the issue for the legalistic interpreter of the law, but **they were already serving Him wholeheartedly!–motivated by love!**

They needed a reminder that hearing His word was more important than keeping busy serving Him.

The leaders of Israel were interested in neither.

Hearing God's Word (sitting at Jesus' feet and hearing Him) ought to have a higher priority than keeping busy serving Him.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A MARTHA-- A FRENZIED SERVANT

1. Martha was glad to welcome Jesus into her home. 10:38

But,

2. Martha was distracted with all her "preparations"-- her service for Him (diakonia) 10:40a

Martha lacked patience for spending a lot of time listening to Jesus' words--the Word of God. It's more important to be busy *doing* God's work!

3. Martha was angry because Mary wasn't serving like she was. 10:40c

Swindoll: "It's interesting that anxiety-prone people frequently blame others for their plight. Rather than realizing that their stress is self-appointed, they often criticize others for causing it."

Wiersbe: "Whenever we criticize others and pity ourselves because we feel overworked, we **had better take time to examine our lives.** Perhaps in all our busyness, we have been ignoring the Lord. . . . If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is terribly wrong with our lives."

4. Martha was upset that the Lord didn't do anything about it. 10:40b -- Didn't He care?!!!

5. Martha was worried and bothered about many things--a lot of details! 10:41

"Worried"--She was being "pulled in different directions"--torn apart.

"Bothered"--Noise, tumult, trouble"--she was agitated, worked up, over this.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A MARY-- A LOVING WORSHIPER

1. Mary was spending her time listening to God's Word 10:39a

Bruce Larson: "*We may say that all we have--time, life, money--is the Lord's, but does He have our attention? We may be too busy doing good works.*"

2. Mary was spending her time sitting at Jesus' feet 10:39b

Mary of Bethany is found three times in Scripture and each time she is *at the same place*—at the feet of Jesus!

Here she is seated at His feet, listening to His Word.

In **John 11:32**, she fell at his feet, sharing her grief with Him

In **John 12:3**, she came to his feet to anoint them with oil—an act of worship

That's a front row seat

That's a place of worship

That's a good place to hear everything a person has to say to you

That's a good place to tell someone you love them

3. Mary had chosen the ONE good thing—"the good part" 10:42a

When we're all done with our busywork, do we respond: "That was s-o-o-o good!—I really got *the good part* this time!"

4. Mary had chosen something that would never be taken away from her. 10:42b

There is an implication here that all the busy work won't last!

It's going to come to an end.

Some day we will have to leave it all behind—even our service for Christ!

Remember the old saying: "Only one life will soon be past, only *what's done* for Christ will last!"

It appears that even that isn't true.

If we live to serve Him, we will some day leave all that service behind too.

What we will never leave behind, throughout all eternity [!!!], is our time spent around His feet, listening to Him tell us how much He loves us!

Which of the above best describes you? Either?

EITHER IS BETTER THAN NEITHER!!!

The religious leaders of Israel were neither—The *LAST* thing they wanted to do was listen to Him!

Those who turned back from following Him because the cost was too high were neither

Better to be either of the above, than neither!

In contrast to the religious leaders around them, including the lawyer we met last week, **BOTH ACCEPTED HIM TOTALLY!**

But Martha was so busy serving Him that she had no time left to just enjoy being IN HIS PRESENCE—listening to Him—letting Him know how much she loves Him.

JDP: "To be occupied *with* Christ is more important than being occupied *for* Christ."

What do you need to do about it?

Can you say "No!" to another opportunity to serve Jesus without feeling guilty about it?

Isn't it amazing how quickly we get caught on the performance-based merry-go-round?

I can get sent on more guilt trips about all the things I don't do for Jesus!

Everyone thinks you ought to be doing whatever their particular thing is!

There are so many things to do—we want to do it all!

Jesus says we get all worked up—worried and bothered—about **SO MANY things!**

ONLY ONE THING IS REALLY ALL THAT IMPORTANT!

Mary chose it!

It's spending time at His feet, learning from Him and letting Him tell us how much He loves us [and telling Him how much we love Him too!]

Spurgeon: [Speaking concerning this passage and revival] "The way to get revival is to begin at the Master's feet; you must go there with Mary and afterwards you may work with Martha. When every Christian's heart is set right by feeding on Christ's Word and drinking in Christ's Spirit, then will the revival come."

How about making ONE necessary New Year's resolution this year?

I'm always nervous about this kind of message because we have a tendency to hear what we want to hear!

—Some of you don't need to hear this message today.

You need to resolve to quit sitting around letting *everyone else* do the work and start doing your part. There are some who are content to let others do work you should be doing for the body of Christ. You need to pitch in and get busy!

Some may be like the parents who give their child \$5 or \$10 with the only requirement being that they stay out of their hair for the evening. We go to church on Sunday, give God our offering and then expect Him to go away and leave us alone.

If that's you, God would like a bit more of your service!

Need for children's workers [My wife's request!]

Need for set-up people

Need for caring people to listen and help others

- BUT Some of us really need to hear this message!

We need to realize that it is more important to sit down at Jesus' feet, take a deep breath, and spend some time alone with Him, letting Him talk to us.

He just wants to tell you that He loves you - and that love doesn't depend on how much work you get done for Him this week!

Some of us are so driven by a performance standard - *we have to get a lot done for Jesus* - **as if our acceptance by Him depended on how much work we do**; we are going to do more than anybody - if it kills us [and it may!]

If that's you this morning, you need to take some time off to spend a few quiet moments alone with Jesus.

You are busy, and bothered, and worried, about so many things, you just want to hop on your horse and ride off in all directions [for Jesus, of course!!].

Spurgeon: "I do not want less activity . . . but I do pray that we may feel that all our strength lies in God, and that we can only be strong as we are accepted of Christ, and only can be accepted in Christ as we wait upon Him in prayer, trust Him, and live upon Him. Ye may compass sea and land to make your proselytes, but if ye have not the Spirit of Christ ye are none of His. Ye may rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows, but unless ye trust in the Lord your God ye shall not prosper. The joy of the Lord is your strength. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. . . ."

"it may be you will undertake so much service that your time will be occupied, and you will have no space for prayer and reading the Word. The half-hour in the morning for prayer will be cut short, and the time allotted for communion with God in the evening will be gradually intrenched upon by this engagement and the other occupation, and when this is the case, I tremble for you. You are killing the steed by spurring it and denying it food; you are undermining your house by drawing out the stones from the foundation to pile them at the top. You are doing your soul serious mischief if you put the whole of your strength into that part of your life which is visible to men, and forget that portion of your life which is secret between you and your God. To gather up all in one, I fear there is a great deal among us of religious activity of a very inferior sort; it concerns itself with the external of service, it worries itself with merely human efforts, and it attempts in its own strength to achieve divine results."

Jesus says to you, "There is only one thing that really matters. It will never be taken away from you. Just lay down all that stuff you are doing and come over here and SIT WITH ME for a little while!"

OCCUPIED WITH JESUS?

An unknown author has captured the lesson of Luke 10 in these poetic words:

"**Martha** in the kitchen, serving with her hands,
Occupied for Jesus with her pots and pans.
Loving Him, yet fevered, burdened to the brim.
Careful, troubled Martha, occupied for Him.

Mary on the footstool, eyes upon her Lord,
Occupied with Jesus, drinking in His word.
This one thing was needful, all else strangely dim;
Loving, resting Mary, occupied with Him.

So may **we, like Mary**, choose the better part:
Resting in His presence, hands and feet and heart;
Drinking in His wisdom, strengthened by His grace;
Waiting for the summons, eyes upon His face.

When it comes, we're ready, spirit, will, and nerve;
Mary's heart to worship, Martha's hand to serve;
This the rightful order, as our lamps we trim:
Occupied WITH Jesus, then occupied FOR Him!"