

Busyness. It's something that every one of us experiences. This past week I found an article online that lists some of the reasons that busyness has become a badge of honor or status symbol for people today. Here are some reasons that were listed:

- **Busyness is viewed as job security.** Busyness is an outward sign of productivity and company loyalty.
- **Busyness is driven by a fear of missing out.** So, we pack our schedules full of all kinds of things to do because we don't want to miss out.
- **Busyness has become a product of the digital age.** Our 24/7 connected culture is blurring the line between life and work. We can't turn it off. Ever had that happen? Ever try to not look at your cell phone for a day?
- **Busyness is a time filler.** In the age of abundant choice, we have infinite ways to fill our time.
- **Busyness can become an escape tool.** If we are busy, then we won't have time to make the hard decisions that need more time to make. In other words, busyness helps us to procrastinate.

I think there is truth for each of us in some of those statements. In America, we are defined by what we do. Our careers. What we produce. It's the first question that is often asked at any social event – *What do you do?* The implication is that if I am not busy doing something, I am somehow less worthy of a person. Yet, there is a trap with that thought process, isn't there? We get so busy in life, that we soon realize that we can't get everything done. Since we can't get everything done in our busy lives, we have to begin to prioritize things in our lives. What are the things that we put on the top of that list, and what are the things that get pushed a little further down the list? **So, how do we go about doing that?** Perhaps, that is the question that Jesus is trying to answer in our text this morning.

This is the fifth Sunday in a row that the Gospel Lesson has come from Luke chapter 9 & 10. As we have looked at these lessons, you could ask a simple question – *What does a follower of Jesus look like?* We have talked about how the Christian can expect persecution; a Christian life is a life that requires total commitment; a Christian is expected to support kingdom work; a Christian is to love his neighbor. Today, Jesus reminds us that when God speaks, a Christian will listen to him. Therefore, we need to answer that question: *What does God have to say to Mary, Martha and us in these words?*

These verses are one of those sections in the Bible that many people know what you mean when you talk about a Mary or a Martha. Martha is the busy one and Mary is the lazy one. Right? Mary loves Jesus more, and Martha loves Jesus less. Right? Wrong. Those statements are just not true. Both Mary and Martha loved Jesus. Both loved to hear Jesus speak to them. Both loved to sit at the feet of Jesus to hear him speak. Both had different ways as to how they expressed their love for Jesus. Luke tells us: **"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said."**

This text doesn't say that Mary didn't help with the dinner preparations. After all, Jesus was coming for dinner. What would you be doing if Jesus came to dinner today at your house? I can see both of them getting their house ready for Jesus. Both sat at the feet of Jesus, listening to his words. In verse 39 of our text, there is a little word that is missing there from the Greek. It's the word, *"also."* Other translations put that little word into that verse. **She (Martha) had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said."** See what that does? If Mary was ALSO sitting at the feet of Jesus listening, then Martha was there ALSO sitting at the feet of Jesus. Martha loved Jesus. Martha loved listening to Jesus. They sat there for a while. But then it was getting near dinner time. There was just too many details to still get done to be ready to eat.

Martha gets up to finish those preparations. I imagine that Martha began to think in her head, *why am I doing all the work? Why doesn't Mary get up and help me?* Finally, those frustrations came out in the words that she speaks to Jesus and says: **"Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"** Then Jesus turns to Martha and says: **"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."**

These words of Jesus are words of invitation. He wants Martha to set aside the details for dinner for a little longer. He wants Martha to sit at his feet a little longer. He's got a lot to teach them. Why? Jesus knows he doesn't have all that long to be with them. Remember what Luke said about Jesus. Remember that Luke makes it clear that **"Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."** Jesus is really saying to her: *I know you mean well, Martha. I know you really want to show me how much you love me by getting everything ready for me. But those things can wait. Listen to me, please.* Jesus isn't telling Martha that her hard work was wrong. Jesus is saying that is wrong for her to think that her hard work was more important than sitting at Jesus' feet.

Ever heard those words of Jesus? – *"just stop running around, listen to me?" "I have something much bigger to tell you."* I can still remember the evening that I proposed to my wife. Obviously, she said "yes." We went back to her parent's house to let them know that we were getting married. They weren't there immediately when we got back there. I can still remember her mom when they got there. It was beginning to rain. Before we could even get any words out, she began to run around the house closing windows so that the rain didn't blow in through the open windows. I remember thinking – will you please stop. We have something much more important to tell you. Suddenly, the open windows didn't mean all that much.

Jesus wanted to prepare Mary and Martha what soon was going to happen in their life. Their brother Lazarus was going to die. When Jesus arrives at the tomb that Lazarus had been laid in, you know which sister went out to meet Jesus? Martha. When Jesus told Martha that he was the Resurrection and the life, it is Martha who responds to him and says: **"Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."** (John 11:27) Sitting at Jesus' feet would change Martha's outlook on life.

We live in a busy world. We live in a state of busyness. It's not wrong to work hard. It's not wrong to enjoy the blessings that God has given us. He just doesn't want that busyness to get in the way of sitting at Jesus' feet and listen to his words. Listen to his words of love and peace. Listen to the promise that our sins are forgiven by his death. Amen.