

First Things First: Seeking Him Daily

Luke 10:38-42

INTRODUCTION

Believe it or not...the end has arrived! Yes, we conclude our study on revival this morning.

As we have shared with you many times, let us not forget that revival is... *“the extraordinary movement of the Spirit of God in the hearts of _____ producing extraordinary results.”*

Revival is the Reviver at work in the life of His own, the church. **When revival hits a church, she gets her life in order!** We have learned that the **vertical** aspect of revival - *that is, our relationship with God - includes importance of humility, confession of sin, repentance, the provision of grace, a pursuit of holiness and the need for obedience.* The **horizontal** implications of revival - *that is, how a right relationship with God affects our relationships with others - includes pursuing a clear conscience before God & others, forgiveness, moral purity and the Spirit-filled life.*

For this morning, we focus our attention on the need to seek Him daily through the practice of spending time along with God, in His word & prayer. **This is what is known as a personal devotional life.** Is this important? Yes! Is it always easy and consistent? No! However, we must not give up or make excuses.

The Lord Jesus was extremely sensitive to "first things." He emphasized continuously *putting first things first.* For example, the Bible **states**, *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." (Mt. 5:23-24)* Later in the same sermon, He restates the principle of 'first things first': *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Mt. 6:33)*

He illustrated that the way to avoid hypocrisy is to put **first things first.** *“How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” (Mt. 7:4-5)*

An incident took place in the home of good friends...beloved friends that allowed Jesus to teach one of the biggest lessons of His entire ministry. The entire incident didn't take a great amount of time and if it were not for Dr. Luke we would never have known about it. Yet, in this passage Jesus tells us unmistakably what ought to be the **first priority** of every life that desires to grow in intimacy with God. He not only tells us to put **first things first**, He tells us what that first thing ought to be.

Please open your Bibles to **Luke 10:38-42.**
Please note with me the following:

I. THE _____ (10:38)

One point needs to be made at the beginning. Both Martha and Mary evidently knew who Jesus was and were glad to welcome Him into their home. Yet as we study this passage, it is soon clear that the two sisters were quite different in temperament. Their ways of making Jesus feel at home could not have been more different.

Martha and Mary were both loyal disciples. They loved Jesus and wanted to show Him a proper welcome. It was a great honor to have Jesus stay with them. I think Jesus came to their home because He knew He would be welcomed. It was a safe and welcome haven from the storm clouds of controversy that were gathering all around Him. About this text itself, I should add that there is nothing particularly difficult about it. The words are straightforward and there are no unusual theological problems. Jesus comes to the home, Martha reacts one way, Mary another, and Jesus comments on the difference. **That's all there is.** Yet perhaps because of its simplicity, the urge to take sides is almost irresistible. Which sister was right? Was Martha justified in what she said? Should Mary have done more than sit at Jesus' feet?

II. Mary's _____ (10:39)

Mary appears for certain three times in the gospels—**Luke 10, John 11, and John 12**. In all three places she is always in the same place—at the feet of Jesus. **What is she doing? In all instances there is a recognition and acknowledgement of who Jesus is.**

In our text she is at Jesus' feet listening to his words. Consider what this means:

- *Sitting*—_____
- *At the Lord's Feet*—_____
- *Listening*—_____
- *To His Word*—_____

Those four words reveal Mary's heart. She is utterly devoted to the Lord and wants nothing more than to be near Him.

Listening is hard work.

And that raises two interesting questions. **Who is serving the Lord—Martha or Mary?** The answer is that both are serving the Lord. Martha is serving Him by preparing the meal, and Mary is serving Him by listening quietly at His feet. **But who is in the better place at this moment?** Mary is. She is able to hear what her Master says and is ready to respond at a moment's notice. Martha is so distracted that she can't hear anything Jesus is saying. Why? Due to busyness...plain & simple. Said busyness yields a bitter attitude and a complaint.

III. Martha's _____ (10:40)

There are several things about Martha that we should take note of, before we consider our Lord's words spoken to her.

1. It is Martha who is the _____ person in our text, not Mary.

2. Martha was not necessarily _____ that Mary was spending time with Jesus, but _____ that Mary was not helping her.

3. It is not Martha's service which was wrong, but her _____ in that service.

4. Martha's frustration, anger, and temper tantrum may not be excusable, but it is at least _____.

5. Martha's words reflect not only anger, but a lack of _____ and a lack of _____.

IV. Jesus' _____ (10:41-42)

How tenderly Jesus speaks to his frustrated servant: *"Martha, Martha."* He knows her name and He repeats it twice to assure her of His love. He knows how she feels, and He understands her frustration. Even in His words of reproof, there is warmth and compassion in His voice.

Note the contrast between *"many things"* and *"one thing."* Here is the heart of the problem. Martha was so pulled in every direction that she forgot the reason for it all: Jesus had come to her home that day! The *"many things"* had overwhelmed the *"one thing"* that really mattered.

How did it happen that Mary was in the *"better"* place? Answer: **She chose it.** Given the same opportunity that Martha had, she chose to go to the living room and sit at Jesus' feet. **It did not happen by chance; it never does.** You will never end up at Jesus' feet by accident. You must choose to go there, or it will never happen.

CONCLUSION

What can we take home with us from this text? The essence of discipleship is not our service rendered to Christ but finding our sustenance in Christ. It is not being a Martha, but a Mary. Discipleship is not so much a teeth-gritting devotion to duty, as a joyful devotion to and dependence on Christ.

Time to make it personal: who are you? Martha or Mary? Let me put it another way:

Are you Compulsive, Committed or Complacent?

Compulsive People	Committed People	Complacent People
Highly, but wrongly motivated	Rightly motivated	Unmotivated
Motivated by self interest: Achievement Power Praise Fear/guilt	Rightly motivated: Love Joy Grace	Motivated by self interest (or spiritually unmotivated): Pleasure The world
Has a religious look	Cares little about the appearance, but only of the Lord's favor	
Result/success orientation (bottom line)	Servant/faithfulness orientation	Avoidance orientation
Product orientation	People orientation	Pleasure orientation
Want to use God	Want to be used by God	Want to be blessed, indulged by God

Christian life is about balance; learning to balance duty and devotion. Someone has said it **well:**

Sitting WITHOUT serving is _____

Serving WITHOUT sitting is _____

Serving AFTER sitting produces power and _____.