

Luke 10:38-42 – First Things First

Grace Mercy and Peace are now yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Our Gospel reading for today picks up from our last few weeks of Sermons following through the Gospel of Luke as Jesus has set his face towards Jerusalem. In previous weeks, Jesus has sent out 72 to go forth ahead of him and prepare the way for his coming. Proclaiming the coming kingdom of God with all urgency and leaving behind all to quickly get the message out. The messiah is here! The kingdom of God Draws near to you. Last week we heard Jesus give the famous parable of the good Samaritan. Jesus asks who was the good neighbor and the most unlikely character, the Samaritan loved his neighbor. Jesus commends us to do the same, to love and to care for those in need.

Today in our Gospel reading we see Jesus continuing on His way towards Jerusalem. Like the 72 he sent out, Jesus enters a village and enters the house He is invited into. Martha invites Jesus and we assume the disciples along with him into her home. You can imagine how quickly their home was crowded and filled with hungry disciples. In the middle of this crowded room sits Jesus and around him His disciples. Martha's sister, Mary is also among them. Sitting at the feet of Jesus as he teaches and speaks with the gathered disciples.

Can you imagine what that would be like? The voice that a few chapters ago called out to the disciples to cast their nets over the side catching fish, the voice that called the disciples to follow, the voice that brought healing, restoration and peace to many, the voice that preached to thousands about the coming kingdom of God and even the voice called the dead to life. This

voice, this man Jesus is sitting in your living room, surrounded by His followers. For Mary this is a wonderful thing and she sits down at Jesus feet. The position of a learner and disciple and listens to this voice.

What causes wonder and joy for one sister is a source for anxiety and anguish for the other.

Where Mary sees an opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus, Martha sees a room she must entertain. Anyone that has had company to their home can relate to Martha. There are mouths to feed and not enough hands to assist with the task at hand. Can you imagine the stress of trying to feed the God of the universe and His disciples in your home? While she is dealing with all of this anxiety, she sees her sister Mary just sitting there with so much to be done. Could you imagine the frustration. You can then see where she is coming from, when she approaches Jesus and asks "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

So who is in the right and who is in the wrong in this scenario. Really pause and think for a moment where you would find yourself in this situation. I know we have read this whole passage together but put yourself in their shoes. Do you find yourself sitting with Mary at the feet of Jesus or do you see yourself serving diligently with Martha to make everything perfect for the guests gathered in your home? Where do you find yourself?

As Jesus surveys the situation he lovingly reproves Martha. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." Is this what you expected Jesus to say? What Jesus does here is two fold. One he recognizes the very real concerns that Martha has - there is a lot

to be troubled with in a house full of disciples. There are many things to be anxious about. Yet Jesus tells Martha that there is something beyond the anxiety. Something that comes first. He reminds her that what Mary has chosen is eternal. It goes beyond herself and connects her directly with the God of the universe. Hearing his Word and being in his presence is beyond any stress or anxiety or perceived need that Martha could face in a room full of disciples. First things first in other words.

As Mary and the rest of the disciples sit at the feet of Jesus, as they take on a posture of a learner, a follower, a disciple of Jesus, they gain something which is eternal. They hear the Word of the living God before them and from His mouth flow blessing after blessing. The God of the universe through his living and active word brings to the disciples their identity, their purpose and ultimately brings them life. The Word brings their identity, their purpose and brings them life. The one who spoke to calm the waters of Galilee speaks and calls his disciples to him. He brings to them a new title, not sinner, but child of God. They are given this new identity being called to sit at the feet of Jesus. Like the 72 the disciples are given a new purpose, they are called to be faithful. To love God, to love their neighbor and to bring the good news of the kingdom of heaven to all the world. Finally the voice that a few chapters ago raised the dead daughter of Jairus to life, calls those sitting at the feet of Jesus to new life. Life eternal. What a wonderful joy to be seated at Jesus feet and to hear these things spoken to you.

Living 2000 years later, we do not have the great privilege of having Jesus dine in our living room and stay with us for a few days. How are we in our 21<sup>st</sup> century context, living here in Las Vegas Nevada, how do we sit at the feet of Jesus. How do we join Mary and the Disciples and sit at the feet of the God of the universe?

While I was thinking about this I was reminded of an experience I had when I just started out at the seminary. One of the first things I did was purchase a brand-new Bible. Newly unwrapped, fresh pages and that new Bible smell all included. I got one of those large journaling Bibles so I could copy down the wisdom my professors gave to me and use it for the future. Being a new Bible, I was proud of it and brought it everywhere with me. During that time I was fortunate enough to be assigned to a church that sent me to visit the shut ins near the congregation.

One of my first visits was to a man who was a blue collar worker all of his life. I loved talking with him and when it came time to read scripture, I pulled out that brand new Bible and got excited. He wanted to read along with me so we grabbed his own Bible. It looked like he had this Bible since his own confirmation. As he opened the pages and flipped to our passage. You could barely read the words on the page. Hundreds of notes, bible studies of the past, personal thoughts, highlights and underlines marked each and every page. In that moment I felt silly with my brand-new Bible and I had truly encountered someone who has spent time at the feet of Jesus.

One way we as Christians, like this shut-in I visited, sit at the feet of Jesus is in our own personal study of the Word. We sit at the feet of Jesus as we take the time to read and digest the word of God in our daily lives. When we read mark and inwardly digest the Word of the Lord. We get the same thing when we gather together as Christians and read the Word together. In Bible study in our families, with our friends and with our church family here.

We also sit at the feet of Jesus and encounter his word as we come into this house of worship and encounter the real present God in this place. We sit at the feet of Jesus through the

worship service when we confess our sins to him and he forgives us, we sit at his feet when the Word of God is read to us by readers and pastors. We sit at the feet of Jesus when we hear His word preached to us and when we receive Jesus in the sacrament. While the living God might not be eating dinner in our living room, we have ample time to sit at the feet of Jesus and to hear His word and follow him.

Sitting at the feet of Jesus is a tall order. It is life changing and disrupting to our lives. Brothers and sisters in Christ, like Martha, what is keeping us from joining the others, from joining the disciples and Mary from sitting at the feet of Jesus. What is keeping us away from His word and presence in our own lives? What anxiety and trouble lead us to not sit at the feet of Jesus, but to go and worry in the Kitchen with anything and everything else?

That attitude of Martha still rears itself today. For many, sitting at the feet of Jesus isn't possible because of how busy life can be. For every moment we can sit at the feet of Jesus 12 other things reach and drive for our attention. Sports, family, homework, friends, obligations and even our own work can draw us away from sitting at the feet of Jesus. There are certainly times to go and do these good things, but like Martha they often take charge over what is most important. We leave the good portion that can never be taken and trade it for something less important, less than eternal. Our busyness takes us from the feet of Jesus.

For others sitting at the feet of Jesus is a difficult endeavor. The pastors and people at church use words and phrases I don't understand. When I sit to read the Bible, I am completely lost in terms, authors, names and places and I can't understand what is before me. I have trouble understanding a book written over 2000 years ago to a people nothing like my own. It leads us

to give up. I do not understand what is doing on in church, why pastor does the things he does and it seems like he is speaking a different language. To close the book in frustration. To leave the bible study confused and sad. To leave worship lost. The difficulty in reading and being in the word can lead us away from the feet of Jesus.

Worst of all, our apathy can lead us away from the feet of Jesus. While I go to church, it isn't a really big deal in my day to day life. I just don't have the drive or desire to sit at the feet of Jesus. It isn't relevant to life and sitting there learning is not something I really want to do. I have more important things to do and I want to prioritize differently. I just want to live my life. Our apathy can lead us away from the feet of Jesus.

Like Martha we often get swept away from sitting at the feet of Jesus and find ourselves anxious and worrying about things that ultimately don't matter. The busyness of life, the difficulty of the task and the apathy we can have towards our time in the presence of God can all lead us away from the feet of Jesus. For us as Christians, it is important for us to remember this simple truth: **THE WORD OF GOD OR SITTING AT THE FEET OF CHRIST ISNT SOMETHING THAT WE FIT INTO OUR LIVES OUR LIVES FIT INTO THE STORY OF GOD. THE WORD OF GOD ISNT SOMETHING THAT WE FIT INTO OUR LIVES OUR LIVES FIT INTO THE STORY OF GOD.** As Christians living by sitting at the feet of Jesus we find ourselves swept up into God's own story. Our faith isn't a small section of our lives for Sunday, but rather everything that we are, all that we do all find their source in the story of God. Our lives become shaped by Gods own story he tells us as we sit at his feet.

How difficult a calling we as followers of Christ are called to. To live in the story of God.

Busyness, difficulty and apathy all lead us away from the feet of Jesus. Our sin leads us to walk away from the one who gives us an identity, purpose and life. Yet the story of God tells us about a Lord and Savior that lovingly calls us back. Martha, Martha, come, see what the good portion is. Hear my Word and receive my blessings. In the story of Jesus we see a God who loves us so much that He continues his walk to Calvary and dies for the sin of the world. That our sin might die with him. That our sin of apathy, giving up and misdirected priorities might be forgiven. That through the resurrection of our Lord and Savior He draws us by the Holy Spirit to sit at His feet once more. To be drawn to new life and life eternal. Forgiven and free in Jesus.

In this new life as we look our busyness like Martha is rearranged. What is first we are asked. The word of God is difficult, yet we are called to grow in our faith in understanding, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Finally our apathy turns into patient hope. Sitting at the feet of our Lord and Savior as we await his return.

Until that glorious day – may the peace of Christ keep you sitting at his feet.