

Going Deeper with the Sermon

Tash Luke 10:38-43

“highlighting prayer”

“When you say yes to something, you say “no” to something else”

Our lives are full of juggling so many balls, from our families expectations, work expectations, study expectations, friendship expectations, managing finances and than too top it all off God’s expectations on us – but what if in the midst of our busyness we are missing out on something? What if because we are saying yes to so many things, we are actually saying “no” to the most important thing? This was the experience of a woman whose story is recorded in Luke 10:38-42 - Martha.

.....Martha thought that her being busy would please Jesus...

You see she had a lot to do that day – the day Jesus came to visit her village of Bethany just outside of Jerusalem.. We are not sure if she knew him intimately at this time but it is evident that she at least knew of him and knew him to be someone of significance (In John 11 she would profess him to be the Messiah). And so you welcomed him into her home.

In fact she decided that she was going to make him the most spectacular meal he had ever had – so as Jesus sat in the living room she got busy in the kitchen! She got busy preparing the feast to end all feasts!! She thought to herself “when Jesus tasted her meal he would be pleased with her effort!”

However she noticed that her little sister Mary had a somewhat different perspective on the whole situation - Mary wasn’t getting busy! Infact Mary was doing the exact opposite...As Martha walked passed the living room to set the table in the dining room she noticed her sister sitting at Jesus feet....laughing together with him, listening to him, spending time with him. Martha’s blood began to boil . She thought to herself “why is my sister sitting in there at Jesus feet while I’m in the kitchen, doesn’t she know that she should be helping me with the preparations? That helping me is her duty and it’s more important?” In those days it was the role of the woman to work in the kitchen , it was not common for a woman to behave like a disciple. So Martha began to resent Mary.

But as her resentment grew it grew towards Jesus also. Surely he knew what she was doing for him, surely he was aware of how much trouble she was going to, surely he knew that it wasn’t a woman’s place to sit at his feet and yet he didn’t do anything about it. And so as women tend to do she stewed (both literally and figuratively) , until she could not hold it in any longer....

Martha interrupts the scene to give Jesus a peace of her mind. v 40 “Lord don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me! Isn’t it the case for us also that when our lives are busy we find ourselves telling God what He should be doing.

.....In Jesus’ response Martha discovers what he truly desires....

Jesus’ responds with a rebuke of gentleness v 41 “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her.”

“worried and upset about many things one thing is needed” – some commentators say that Jesus is saying Martha you have spent all your time putting on an extravangant meal when a simple meal would have made do...others talk of how it is a fairly common phrase used in the NT (Luke 18:22, Phil 3:13) to signify the importance of something over other things. In both cases the point that Jesus is making is that Martha had been distracted by so many things that she

she was missing out on the most important that Mary had found.

Mary had chosen what is better and it would not be taken from her. In the greek the words for what is better is actually the “good portion” *Psalm 73:26 , Lam 3:24*

....Mary had chosen the best dish on offer—fellowship with Christ....

IT was as though Mary realised the significance of **Jesus being with them** – she wanted to soak in every word, to receive all that Christ delivered. She sat at his feet as His disciple tuning into every word that the Master had to say and well if that meant saying “no” to the kitchen – to what was expected of her well then she would choose Jesus. A choice that Jesus had hoped Martha would have also made...

When Martha thought that it was all about what she could do for him it was demonstrated to her that instead, Jesus wanted her to have the gift of fellowship with himself. He wanted His voice to be her top priority before her activity. This is what her sister Mary had discovered was better. Whereas Martha’s busyness had distracted her from the voice of God, Mary had savoured every word. Whereas Martha’s activity had caused her to think she knew what was right, Mary’s silence had caused her to come to know more the Righteous One. Whereas Martha’s stress had caused her to tell Jesus what he should be doing, Mary’s submission had caused her to listen and to follow His lead.

Jesus had come to give Martha something that day – she missed it because she was too busy, she was too distracted by her tasks!! She missed out on partaking the meal that wouldn’t be taken away from her!

.....God wants to speak to us also....but are we in danger of missing it?....

When Jesus died on the cross for us he not only accomplished for us presence with God in eternity but he also accomplished for us God’s presence in the now. The voice that is the meal that sustains us....the voice that instructs us how to live....the voice that gives us comfort in hard times....the voice that is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

....Prayer is the doorway to the gift of hearing God’s voice....

Richard Foster “out of all the spiritual disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father.” **Prayer** is the submissive act of saying Jesus you have my heart, It is the the act of saying Jesus you have my ear and I desire your presence to be the sustenance of my life. It is the act of saying I am your disciple and you are my teacher – speak to me Lord. It is the act of saying “no:” to everything else and “yes” to Him.

Questions for reflection

1. **Do you resonate with feeling busy and distracted in your life? How does it affect you?**
2. **What would it mean for you to say “no” to certain things in order to sit at Jesus feet?**
3. **What has been your experience of prayer and fellowship with God?**
4. **Is there anything you need to change in response?**