

Sermon Brief

Luke 10:38-42

“First Things First”

1. Being a church is a big responsibility. We are the one institution on the planet entrusted with the message of eternal life. This means we have a big mission as a church and we know fulfilling this mission is not going to be easy. But we believe in the resurrection of the dead and so we want to serve. We are excited. We want to go. We want to do. And yet as we think about going and doing and serving, there’s something we need to stop and make sure we get right first. While it’s good we want to serve Jesus, it’s possible to get serving Jesus wrong. It’s easy to make a fundamental mistake as we go out to serve Jesus and that mistake is so clearly illustrated in this story about two sisters. *This story shows us how we can tell we are getting a good thing wrong, it helps us see why we are getting it wrong, and it forces us to think about how to get it right.*

2. **First, we see several symptoms something is going wrong in the way Martha is serving Jesus.**

Before we look at what Martha is getting wrong, we should notice what she is getting right. Like for example the fact, she understands who Jesus is and she is serving. That’s more than a lot of people, and yet, there are some signs she is going about in the wrong way. One she’s distracted. Two, she’s questioning Jesus. Three, she’s become focused on herself. Four, she’s making demands of Jesus. And then five, she’s worried and anxious about many things.

3. **Second, Jesus reveals what’s at the source of the problem for Martha.**

She has made a bigger priority out of doing stuff for Jesus than she has listening to Jesus. One of the keys to understanding the point of this story is the contrast. While Mary is experiencing the same circumstances as Martha, she’s demonstrating none of the same symptoms. Why? It’s because she is sitting at Jesus’ feet listening. **This story is a warning not to let all the practical concerns of life, even the good concerns, that are involved in loving one’s neighbor and serving Christ to choke your love for God and specifically your desire to hear His Word.** We need to serve. We need to go. We need to do. But first, devotion to Christ. First, learning from Christ. First, listening to the word of Christ. It doesn’t matter how busy you are and all the good you are doing, if your priorities aren’t in order, problems are coming quickly. It’s not that Jesus wants us to stop being concerned about loving our neighbor. It’s that he knows you can’t love your neighbor well without first loving God. They are connected, and not just connected. There’s an order to them. You need to do, but first you need to hear.

4. **Third, think with me a little about the solution.**

This is a real problem. We want to be a serving church, but serving is busy and life often gets complicated as a result, and so often what starts off good turns out bad. so how can we be a church that's marked by the right kind of service? First, we need to do some personal evaluation. Are you allowing the urgent things in life to keep you from the one thing that is important. If so, why? Second, repent and make a plan. What's your plan to make listening and learning from Jesus first priority in your life in the year ahead?

5. One of the best ways to show Jesus you love Him is to listen when He speaks. And that's also the place to start if we are going to really love our neighbor. If we are going to be a serving church, it starts with being a listening church, and being a listening church starts with making a priority in the middle of the busyness of life to sit at his feet in faith praying and expecting Him through His Word to change and transform you.

For Further Thinking and Encouragement:

1. Blogs:

[Embracing Suffering in Service](#)

[You Will Suffer from Your Work and It is Not Sin](#)

2. Audio:

[I am tired and busy how do I make time for the Bible
When You are Too Busy to Be Godly](#)

3. Devotional:

[5 Day Devotional: Cultivating Habits of Grace](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. We are going to look at Luke 10:38-42. But, before we look at this passage. Let's just notice what story comes right before it. What is the story Jesus tells in Luke 10:30-37? What command is Jesus expositing in that story?
2. I want you to think about the way Jesus explains that command to love your neighbor for a few minutes. This a pretty familiar parable so we don't need to go too deep. But, what stands out to you about the way Jesus defines loving one's neighbor from the parable of the Good Samaritan?
3. I wanted you to think about that story for a moment, because, it reminds us that the

Christian life is going to be difficult. One of the most basic commands in the Bible is to love your neighbor, and when you think about what God means by love your neighbor, you see that it's radical, it's all out, it's sacrificial. Whatever Jesus means in Luke 10:38-42, he doesn't mean that the Christian life is going to be easy and if you are tired that must mean something is automatically wrong. We are supposed to be people who serve and that service will often involve suffering.

4. But at the same time, service can go wrong. What were some of the signs service was going wrong for Martha? This is important. We live in a busy culture. Serving will make our lives even busier. But, we can't just ask am I busy as if that were automatically wrong. You will be busy if you are loving your neighbor. What can we ask using these signs to evaluate whether something is going wrong in the way we are serving others?
5. What is the source of the problem for Martha? What did Mary get right that Martha was missing and what does this teach us about priorities?
6. If you don't get this order right, listening then doing, what will happen to your doing? Can you think of any illustrations of this?
7. One of the first steps to serving well as a church is evaluating our lives. And we need to get to the heart. What are some heart level reasons we are tempted to focus on doing first rather than listening?
8. Besides evaluating, we need to make a plan. What would your life look like if you believed God spoke through His Word? Is there any difference believing that would make on your daily habits? What is your plan to make a priority out of listening to and enjoying Jesus on a regular basis?