



#9 When doing gets in the way

The story of Mary and Martha is strategically placed as a continuation of the discussion of what it means to “Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and, to love your neighbour as yourself”. Jesus concludes the parable of the Good Samaritan with the words, “go and do likewise” and in the very next scene he commends Mary for doing nothing but sitting at his feet!

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? The expert in the law replied, The one who had mercy on him. Jesus told him, **Go and do likewise**. 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**. But Martha was **distracted by all the preparations** that had to be made. She came to him and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me! Martha, Martha, the Lord answered, **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 away from her.”
Luke 10:36-42

The parable of the Good Samaritan extols the virtues of hospitality and service to others yet this story says, “hold up, sit down at the feet of Jesus and listen!”.

- Why do you think this passage was placed directly after the parable of the Good Samaritan?

When doing gets in the way

“When we get too caught up in the busyness of the world, we lose connection with one another—and ourselves” Jack Kornfield”

Martha was so distracted by her busyness that she had lost the significance of the moment. She was in the presence of Jesus and didn't know it! This could be a bit like Christians who are so busy being good Christians that they forget Jesus.

Hospitality in this culture had a very high value. Not to provide it would bring public shame yet Jesus is drawing our attention to something of ever greater value. Martha was doing the “right” thing, yet she had got her life out of all proportions and so became worried and upset about so many things.

- When does your life get out of proportion?
- How does doing the “right” thing become “wrong”?

- What do you do for your personal renewal?
- When was the last time you sat at the feet of Jesus?

There is a time to do and a time to sit

For everything there is a time and a season . . . a time to be busy and a time to sit still, a time to do and a time to do nothing!

Mother Teresa practiced this, she would pray in the chapel until she could pray no more, then she would serve until she could serve no more, then she would pray . . .

Without times of stillness life becomes an endless noise of doing.

It is in this stillness that worries and cares of life can be brought to the feet of Jesus.

This is your place of grace where you don't have to DO anything but simply to be loved.

This is renewal!

“Martha, Martha why are you so busy with all your cares and worries?”

- What season are you in right now?
- If you were a character in this text who would you be, Mary or Martha?
- What would Jesus be saying to you ?

Loving God, ourselves and others is a grace that is given to us

“We love because God first loved us” 1 John 4:19

Love assignment #9: Do nothing!

Find a quiet place and be still

Prayer

O Lord my God,
teach my heart where and how to seek you,
where and how to find you.

Lord, if you are not here but absent,
where shall I seek you?

But you are everywhere, so you must be here,
why then do I not seek you?...

Lord, I am not trying to make my way to your height,
for my understanding is in no way equal to that,
but I do desire to understand a little of your truth
which my heart already believes and loves.

I do not seek to understand so that I may believe,
but I believe so that I may understand;

and what is more,

I believe that unless I do believe I shall not understand.

Anselm of Canterbury 1093