

Check Availability: Making Room When Life Feels Restless!

Week 3: Anointed No! (Luke 10:38-42)

I. Intro:

A. Years ago, when I worked as a regional trainer for Geico we had a required reading for one of our professional development classes. It was an excellent book titled the Seven habits of highly effective people. Written by Stephen Covey. I am sure many of you have heard of it. The book has been around for some time now. We spent hours together learning the principles that are in the book and how to use them in real life.

1. One of the seven habits is this: learn to put first things first.

In other words, once you establish your priorities, make sure that these things are taken care of before anything else. Never let anything get in the way of your priorities. Put first things first.

B. Early in my ministry career I was introduced to a phrase that was taught to me by a Pastor friend of Mine named Wayne Buechler. Pastor Wayne is a very wise and prophetic man. He would often say to me,

1. "Mike you know it's ok to say no to some things....an 'Anointed No' is always better than an 'Unanointed Yes.'" That phrase is one of those words of wisdom that through the years has always stuck with me.

C. When I combined that knowledge of 'Putting the first things first' along with the wisdom of an 'Anointed no,' I begin to better discern when to say 'no' and when to say 'yes' or better yet what is God saying, instructing or wanting me to do versus what is man, fear or busyness compelling me to do.

II. Recap Sermon Series:

In this preaching series entitled "Check Availability" we have been looking at how do we create margin and balance in our life. How to make room when life feels restless.

A. Last week Pastor Craig asked the question, "If we are living lives that are often restless, what is it that we are afraid of?" He also reminded us of a similar question asked by Jesus of the disciples when they were panicking during a storm in the boat.

III. Today as we continue in our sermon series, we will look at the book of Luke 10:38-42.

The story of two busy sisters and how they each prioritized an encounter with Christ.

A. The point is to live a balanced life as Jesus did, there are some areas to which we must pay attention. The Bible says, "and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

1. Be wise. Proverbs 4:7. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: Though it cost all you have, get understanding. 8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.

2. Be still. The Psalm 46:10 records these words. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Luke 10: 38-42 (NIV) - 38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 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!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

B. So at this time Jesus was beginning to establish a following. Mary and Martha lived just outside Jerusalem in the town of Bethany. They were sisters and their brother was Lazarus, the one Jesus raised from the dead. Jesus was apparently friends with all three of them. We are told that Martha was the one who met Jesus at the door that day and welcomed him into their house. Now there is no doubt that she wanted everything to be just right in her home when Jesus came to visit. I mean after all, if I told you that Jesus would be coming to your house today at 1 o'clock, I'm guessing that most of you would get up and go home so you could be prepared for his visit. Right?

C. So Martha was busy working while Mary was at the feet of Jesus listening to what he had to say. I cannot help but notice in this passage that Jesus tells Martha that Mary has chosen the best part. And what we notice here are some differences in these two women. Basically, Mary chose to sit and be still at the feet of Jesus

while Martha elected to get the meal and her home ready for the visit.

Both have a priority; both were necessary, but one of them shows the better option.

D. Notice first, there was a difference in their focus.

(Definition) Focus simply means that we center our attention on something or someone. And we do it at the expense of everything else.

1. Jesus was the honored guest, so it was customary to prepare a meal for the guest. And I feel sure Martha put everything she had into it. She was busy serving Jesus and to be clear at this point-Martha's service was not a bad thing. But the problem is Martha had allowed it to become her primary focus.

a. Now think about this for a moment. You have the Lord of the universe-God himself in your home, but you are too busy to listen to what he has to say. You are too busy doing things for him and you have no time to speak with him or listen and receive from him.

b. I am sure all of us can relate to this. It still happens to each of us of course. We come to church, we sit in the pew in the presence of the Lord and our thoughts are 1000 miles away. Sometimes our minds are just too busy to hear what God has to say.

2. One of the things this passage has to say to all of us is that we must be careful that we do not put all our energy into things that are temporary.

Spending time with Jesus is always the better option. Choose the best part.

E. Two. There was a difference in their fellowship.

1. Let's look now at Mary. She was seated at the feet of Jesus. The Greek implies that she literally sat down right at His feet. As close as she could get. Mary did not want to miss a single word that Jesus had to say.

2. This morning as we all gather in this room, we each have a choice to be as close to Jesus as we want to be. We can have all of him that we want. So, we all have to answer the question, how much do I want?

a. Like Martha and Mary we get to determine our own level of spiritual experience when we make time for an encounter with Jesus. So, here's the question again. How much of God do you want?

3. In this passage it all comes down to priorities; what comes first in our life?

a. Now let's go back to Martha. We are not told where she was in the house except that she was distracted by having so much to do. We assume she was in the kitchen. One version of the Bible says she was cumbered. That's a word most of us do not use today. It simply means she felt the weight of having too much to do. I've been there, I am sure you've been there. Martha was driven by her work, but her work was driving her away from Jesus. But we do need to remember that Martha was the one who welcomed him into their home. Then she went to work.

4. Not to be too deep, but I believe what Martha is experiencing is what's called a vexation of the spirit. Vexation of the spirit is found throughout the book of Ecclesiastes. Under, the teaching of Solomon. Especially chapters 1-5. Vexation of spirit is a grieved, troubled or perplexed spirit. This was an Old Testament curse given through the Law in Deuteronomy 28, to the disobedient soul, who would not keep God's law. When your spirit is vexed, your mind can't rest.

So, it brings restless days and nights and weariness and dissatisfaction.

a. One of the ways our spirit becomes vexed is when we look for material things or things outside of God to make us happy, and we still end up without peace, complaining and dissatisfied.

b. For reference. See the children of Israel wandering for 40 years not at peace, all because they failed to trust God and enter into his time of rest.

5. Now here is a picture of what happens in the day-to-day life of the Christ following believer. We welcome Jesus into our heart-then we go to work. We start by spending time with him, then we get too busy with life distractions. This spiritual distraction traces all the way back to the garden. Adam and Eve were at peace until they got distracted by an outside voice, they then started questioning God and forgot about the beauty of just walking with him in the cool of the day. If they had only given that serpent an Anointed No!

6. I mean all of us are called to serve in some way, but never at the expense of our personal time with Jesus. We can be so busy doing things for Jesus that we fail to spend time with Jesus. And most of us are guilty in

this area at some point.

Very few of us spend enough time at the feet of Jesus just listening to what he has to say.

7. Hebrews 2:1 says we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.
And what we have to do to drift? Nothing. It is very easy. I read the story of a man who just bought a boat and kept it in the harbor on the coast. A hurricane warning was in effect and the storm was about to make landfall. He didn't know what to do so he called a friend in Florida to get some advice. His friend said, don't tie the boat to anything on land. If you do, it will be ripped to pieces.

a. He said, your only hope is to anchor deep, and the boat will ride out the storm.

That's good advice for all of us. Anchor deep.

b. A second thing of course is that if you do nothing, the boat will drift away.

If you do nothing with Jesus, you will drift away.

F. Three. When we go back to Martha and Mary notice also there was a difference in their feelings.

1. Look at what Jesus said about Martha in verse 41. We read that she was troubled. She was anxious, she was worried. She was distracted.

a. Get the picture. Troubled, anxious, worried, distracted-that's what you get when you don't keep our focus on Jesus, and we don't give an 'anointed no' to distractions.

b. Remember Martha had the one right there with her who had...

- Spoken during a storm... He simply said, "Be still" and the waters obeyed him.
- She had the one who would calm the demon possessed.
- The one who had brought her brother Lazarus back to life.

c. All of that, yet she was not at peace. She was anxious, worried, troubled, distracted.

d. Just imagine if she lived in this world today. How would she feel?

Let me tell you it has not gotten any easier.

- We send our kids to school and don't know if they will be safe or not
- Look at our bank accounts and we don't know if we will make it through the month
- Our recent health report has caused us to be less than peaceful

All of this seems to be a part of living in the 21st-century.

2. Now let's look back at Mary. The Bible doesn't tell us what Mary was feeling. Just tells us that she was sitting at the feet of Jesus. She was focused. One of the first Bible verses I remember memorizing was this: "you will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you." That's what Mary was practicing.

G. Now notice what Jesus says to Martha.

He said, Martha, one thing is necessary. Doesn't that make it simple? Just one thing to remember here.

1. Martha I know your day is full, I know your schedule is busy-I know all about you, but still-one thing is necessary. I mean what would it matter if dinner were a few minutes late; the biscuits a bit burned? The floor un-mopped.

2. We get busy with all kinds of things-work-home-family, but listen,
if you're not spending time with Jesus then you have missed the main thing.

3. Stephen Covey in his 7 habits book also quoted the Legendary Hall of fame football coach Vincent Lombardi by reminding us that, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."

This means keeping your focus and efforts on the most important goals will help you accomplish them.

4. Jesus told Martha, Mary has chosen the good part, the best part and it will not be taken away from her.

H. Saying No to distractions is not always easy, but the Bible gives us many examples of people to follow. People who were anointed to say no in situations that at first glance may not have seemed logical.

1. My favorite is David. Imagine the young, small and ruddy shepherd boy named David agreeing to use the King's sword and amor to face Goliath. The weight of the metal vest alone probably would have caused him

to get his butt kicked. Sometimes an anointed no simple means respectfully and boldly telling the king no thank you. I'd rather trust God and these rocks that he has gifted me to throw.

IV. Conclusion:

A. David Ring is a Christian evangelist and motivational speaker who has suffered from cerebral palsy since birth. His father died when he was 11. Cancer took his mother four years later. Ring was an orphan at the age of fourteen. Depressed from the combination of losing his parents and the difficulties of his disability, Ring dropped out of high school. Ring specifically struggled with losing his mother, the only woman he believed would ever love him. He attempted to commit suicide many times over the course of the following two years due to his depression.

Then in 1970, he gave his life to Jesus. He now says I have Cerebral Palsy, but Cerebral Palsy doesn't have me. I love that.

He said in his testimony, don't feel sorry for me. One day I'm gonna be well. I won't talk funny anymore. I won't walk with a limp. God's still making me and he's baking me.

1. And one day he will open the oven and he will say well done, good and faithful servant.

2. Those are the words I want to hear also.

B. Keep your focus in one place—on Jesus and I believe he will give us the knowledge and wisdom for when we are anointed to say 'No' or anointed to say 'Yes.'

Matthew 11:28 describes an invitation from Jesus as the way to the father.

[28] Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."