

**Sermon:**

**Text:** Luke 10:38 – 42

**Date:** July 18, 2010 AM

**Place:** Jesup First UMC

One day, Paul Newman was sitting outside a café, drinking coffee with a friend when his biggest fan in the world pulled into the parking lot. Well, she saw him and really wanted an autograph, but she didn't want to be obnoxious. So, she got out of the car, walked across the parking lot to the ice cream stand, and ordered a large ice cream cone. Then, she paid for it and went back to her car. She was so nervous; her idol was only a few feet away. And when she got into the car, she discovered that she had the keys in one hand and her change in the other, and no ice cream.

So, she got back out of her car, went back to the window, and asked for her ice cream, but the man assured her that he had given it to her. Well, she was stunned. She turned and kinda staggered back toward her car and as she passed Paul Newman, he got up from his seat and said: *"Excuse me, Ma'am. If you are looking for your ice cream, I think you'll find it in your purse."*

Have you ever been that distracted? A recent article in the New York Times said: the main distraction of our society is busyness. We are the busiest, most stressed out people in the world. Our lives may not be productive, but they're filled with things to do. We have deceived ourselves into believing that busy means important. And so, we've become too busy for one another and too busy for God.

In our text, we encounter the hero of all busy people. One day, Jesus went to the home of Mary and Martha. Can't you imagine this scene? Mary and Martha were busy in the kitchen when the doorbell rang. Now, Martha was far too busy to stop what she was doing; so, Mary answered the door. And she escorted Jesus and the disciples into the Living Room and found them a comfortable place to sit. And then, instead of going back to the kitchen, she sat at Jesus' feet. And a little while later, Martha came huffing and puffing into the room and said: "Lord, don't you even care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But Jesus said: "Martha, Martha, you are distracted by many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best and it will not be taken from her."

If there is a picture of us anywhere in the Bible, it has to be Martha. And so, it would be wise for us to take a closer look at this story and allow it to speak to our lives.

***First, we notice the catch of our busyness.*** There is something within us that allows ourselves to believe that busy means indispensable. A pastor told me recently: "*Tucker, I've been so busy; and I convinced myself that if I was busy enough, I could make myself indispensable, but instead, I just made myself tired.*" That's the catch! We want to be helpful; we want to be useful for the Kingdom. We want to serve God and to do our very best for the church, but in the end, being busy doesn't make you indispensable; it just makes you tired.

Now, listen, there are some in the church that really have to guard against this. You see, earlier in this same chapter, Jesus tells a wonderful story, the Parable of the Good Samaritan. It's a story that teaches us to demonstrate love for our neighbor through acts of kindness. And yet, right on the heels of this story, Luke tells the story about Mary and Martha to warn us not to get so caught up in doing something for Jesus. You can't earn salvation by doing good works. *"It is by grace you are saved through faith and this not of yourself, even this is a gift from God."*

Martha believed she was doing the right thing. In fact, according to the custom of the day, she was! Believe it or not, she was; she was being a great hostess. But she chose doing something for Jesus over developing a relationship with Jesus and in the end, she was just busy.

***Second, we notice the consequences of our busyness.*** Several studies have been done recently that spell out the toll that busyness has taken on our health, our relationships, and our spirituality. In reality, we've made ourselves so busy doing good things that we don't take time for the better things.

That's what happened to Martha. She was so busy doing something good that she couldn't do the one thing that was better. And we can see two consequences of her busyness. *For one thing, she was distracted.* Distracted from what? From spending time with the Lord.

You know, Yogi Berra was well-known for talking trash behind home plate. Well, a few years ago, the Yankees were playing the Milwaukee Braves in the World Series and Yogi was behind the plate and Hank Aaron came up to bat. And in classic fashion, Yogi said: *“Hey Henry, you’re holding the bat wrong. You’re supposed to hold it so you can read the trademark.”* Well, Hank proceeded to hit the next pitch into the left-field bleachers and after he crossed home plate, he looked down at Yogi and said: *“I didn’t come up here to read.”*

Hey, there are a lot of things – really good things – that can distract us. We have to be careful.

*But I see another consequence of Martha’s busyness; she was annoyed.* Martha was irritated at her sister for not doing what she thought she should be doing. Martha said: “Jesus, don’t you care that Mary isn’t helping me? Tell her to get up and do something.”

Now, that happens a lot! It’s really hard for those who work in the church, who give their time and energy to make the church a better place, to understand why everybody doesn’t do as much as they do or give as much as they give. It’s irritating, but many times, the problem is not “them”; it’s “me”! The struggle is really in the one who is being irritated.

One day, Jesus told Peter: “When you were young you went where you wanted to and did what you wanted to do, but when you’re old someone will take you by the arms and lead you to a place you don’t want to go.” And Peter looked around and pointed at John and said: “But what about him?” And Jesus said: “Don’t worry about him; you come and follow

me.” That’s the point, isn’t it? You’re responsible for you and I’m responsible for me! We are accountable to one another, but not responsible for one another. And so, we don’t need to be annoyed.

Our busyness has some consequences.

*Third, we see the confrontation of our busyness.* Jesus said: “Martha, Martha, you are distracted by many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken from her.” Now, don’t you wish you knew the rest of the story? I mean, what did Martha do next? Did she go back to the kitchen? Did she leave the kitchen and come and sit at Jesus’ feet too? What do you do when you’re confronted by Jesus?

Well, here’s the reality: every time you and I hear God’s Word or read God’s Word, we are confronted! Our sinfulness is confronted by God’s righteousness; our waywardness is confronted by God holy standard. And there are two possible responses. We can say, “You know, that’s just not my problem. That doesn’t apply to me at all.” Or we can repent, and change our way of thinking and behaving.

Now, I don’t know the details of your life. I haven’t looked at your calendar; I don’t know what you do every day, but ... I know we’re busy. Some of us are busy with family stuff. Some of us are busy with work. Some of us have been busy with vacation. We’re a church full of Marthas, too distracted by our own busyness to strengthen our relationship with God. Now, what are we gonna do about it?