

## “Time for Jesus” – Pr Jim Sprengle - Advent Midweek 2 – December 8, 2021

- I. **Luke 10:41-42** – <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”
- II. **If Jesus was expected at your home tonight, what would you do?**
  - a. I think I’ve told you this story before, (it kind of goes with the question I asked the kids at the lambs’ lesson on Sunday about preparing for Jesus), but a lady named Louise Day writes:
    - i. “One day, I taught my young class the story of Jesus visiting Mary and Martha. I carefully explained how Martha had hurried to clean the house and cook a special meal. Then I paused and asked, ‘What would you do if Jesus was going to visit your house today?’ One little girl quickly responded, ‘I’d put the Bible on the table!’”<sup>1</sup>
    - ii. That story is funny on so many different levels, but for our purposes today... do we just give lip service to the Word while we busily walk around it doing other things we consider “more important”?
  - b. The underlying pressure on all of us throughout this holiday season is preparation – and unfortunately, it’s not so much about spiritually preparing for the coming of our Savior, Jesus.
  - c. Some of you might not be too caught up in all the preparations, gifts, parties, decorating and cards... or maybe you started doing that in October
    - i. I always have the best of intentions when it comes to working ahead – but the time always gets away from me and I’m scrambling to just get the basics done.
    - ii. In a strange way, the time before Christmas has become very little about the Christ child – and very much about getting caught up in lots of other things.
  - d. Another one of my “plans” for the Advent season was to buy a nice Advent calendar.
    - i. When we went to go visit Morgan, Andy and Evie in Frankenmuth, Michigan, they have the world’s largest Christmas store called Bronner’s CHRISTmas Wonderland Store.
      1. It’s interesting, but the owner of that store is a member of the church where Andy served as a vicar, St. Lorenz.
      2. In the title of the store, they capitalize Christ, and they unashamedly promote Jesus and the Christian faith.
      3. If you appreciate all things Christmas, this store must be on your bucket list.
    - ii. But getting back to the point, I saw some beautiful Advent calendars at Bronner’s – and these calendars are a great way to keep us centered on Christ in all the preparation – a daily reminder

- e. Here's the thing... I'm not sure God intends for us to check into a monastery on Thanksgiving Day and spend the next month meditating, praying and reading Scripture as the world goes about its commercialized Christmas.
- f. Yet, we are still called to celebrate the meaning of Christmas – Jesus!

III. **The story of Mary and Martha is good for us to consider.**

- a. As Jesus comes to visit the family of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, it takes a lot of preparation and work to host a group.
- b. Jesus and the Apostles make 13 people, and if other disciples were with them, maybe more.
- c. The hospitality committee might be able to help us understand better what it means to host a group of people, prep the food and drinks, the table settings, all the details, and then clean up after.
  - i. Of course, we are talking about first century living too – so Mary and Martha probably had a modest place for gathering.
  - ii. Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, came to spend time in this family's home – and Mary and Martha had very different responses...
- d. Now, I know that we always beat up on Martha for being a busybody and choosing the “wrong portion” as Jesus puts it.
  - i. We had an elders meeting last night and discussed this passage.
    - 1. One of our elders at the meeting who I will keep anonymous said, “If our church was full of Marys, then what would get done?”
    - 2. To which another elder said, “I think that we are Mary sometimes and Martha sometimes, depending on the situation.”
- e. You see, we must go through life making choices about where to put our time and energy.
  - i. In the case of Martha, she got caught up in the preparations of hosting guests, especially someone as important as Jesus...
    - 1. Her intentions were good – doesn't Jesus tell us to serve others? (Matthew 10:43-44)
    - 2. We can't know exactly what was going on in the minds of these sisters, but maybe...
      - a. Mary was always letting Martha do everything – and Martha was fed up with her lazy sister... or,
      - b. In those days, women were not encouraged to learn in the same way as men, so Martha was just getting her sister to focus on her normal responsibilities... or,
      - c. Martha was overwhelmed by the social pressures of treating guests with honor – and she really needed help to show respect these people (especially Jesus)
  - ii. Whatever happened, the point was that sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning was the right thing to do in that moment... no matter

what was going on... no matter if someone else was being lazy – or even if being polite and welcoming was the social standard.

- f. The problem is that we aren't very good at choosing when to be a Martha and when to be a Mary.

IV. **Most of us know the more difficult person to be.**

- a. Mary or a Martha?
  - i. Mary spent her time at the feet of Jesus listening the voice of God in human form...
  - ii. Mary set aside the cares of life for the moment and got caught up in the words of her Savior.
  - iii. Mary was stopping – like a Sabbath rest – for time with God.
  - iv. Martha was super busy, a whirling dervish of activity – anxious.
  - v. Martha focused on a long to-do list that needed to be completed.
  - vi. Martha was not stopping but going – with little consideration for God.
- b. Let's be honest, we easily slip into the shoes of Martha, while stopping at the feet of Jesus like Mary takes real effort.
- c. Isn't it strange that for many of us, stopping to be with Jesus requires effort?
  - i. We need to be intentional, purposeful, and set aside a stopping point to sit at the feet of Jesus, receiving the good portion (vs 42).

V. **What could be better by the way?**

- a. Yes, of course we need to get things done sometimes...
- b. However, that is also an easy excuse to set aside a close connection and fellowship with our Lord.
- c. The good portion and thing that is necessary (as Jesus calls it, vs 42) is all about the grace of God and our portion in that wonderful inheritance.
  - i. The preparations for worldly life are transient, but the portion we have in Jesus is never ending.
  - ii. That is our privilege and desire during this season of Advent, to spend time in the light of Christ – remembering His coming into the world, and looking forward in hope to His return one day.
- d. The fact is, Jesus wants us to spend time with Him and the Father by means of the Holy Spirit...
  - i. We are in a bond of fellowship with our God... Father, Son and Holy Spirit because, in love, God chose us first.
  - ii. The point of Christmas is God's choice to love us by means of sending Jesus into the world to become Savior.
- e. So, as we consider the good portion during this incredibly busy season, it includes time for Jesus
- f. Martha or Mary?
  - i. You decide, but always remember that one thing is necessary – time for Jesus. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Louise Day, Mount Holly, VA. Today's Christian Woman, "Heart to Heart."