

“Help, I am Way Too Busy”- Luke 10:38-42

It's after Labor Day, the summer is over and for the most part the rest and relaxation is over. Route 3 seems more clogged with traffic. Many of us are back in the routine of work, school, soccer, volleyball, and other commitments and guess what? Many of us are discovering that we are way too busy. Perhaps you are feeling like you are drowning. We feel like things are pulling us down. Our anxiety level is already up full throttle. Perhaps you feel like you need a Red Bull energy drink right about now to keep you going. Perhaps you are suffering from what someone called hurried sickness. There is a definition for this in dictionary.com. It is defined as characterized by rushing, anxiousness, being in a continued sense of urgency. Americans take over 200 tons of aspirin and prescription pills for anxiety every year. Our brains are over stimulated. And as a result, relationships get skimmed over, emotions are on edge all of the time. People are being taken off planes for selfish and unruly behavior. When people ask us how we are doing we sigh deeply and say, “We're too busy.” Isn't that the mindset of our age? We build our lives on the premise that personal worth and significance and meaning of life are dependent upon being busy. We are driven people. We are tyrannized by fear that we will not achieve, fear we won't live up to other's expectations or our own. We are “stressed-out” people.

Before we get too far into the year or the season let's stop and take a deep breath and hear what Jesus has to say about our lives. Jesus wants to reel us back in. He wants us to have fulfilled life. Jesus says he has come to give us life to the fullest. He says, “I want you to have life and have it abundantly”. I've come to set you free. We are people who live filled lives, but Jesus is here to give us the power to live fulfilled lives, abundant lives. He wants us to live alive. He wants us to go from a filled life to a fulfilled life.

To go from full lives to fulfilled lives we must first of all determine what is the most important. The demands and busyness on Jesus plate must have been overwhelming. He determines it is time for a break so he goes to the home of close friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Martha welcomed Jesus into her home. Martha sets out to go into hostess overdrive to make sure that her guests are well

taken care of. Mary on the other hand goes and sits at Jesus feet in the living room while Martha was distracted by the dinner she was preparing. She come to Jesus and says, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair that my sister sits here while I do all of the work?” Tell her to come and help me.” Jesus tells her that she was distracted and worried about many things Mary has chosen the better part. It won’t be taken away from her. Jesus is not talking to a busy Martha, but a worried and distracted Martha.

We tend to make Martha the villain in this story. Martha was the hostess and it was extremely important that if you had guests in your home you provided for their needs to the point of depriving yourself. It was more than just being courteous; it was the law of society. Martha was busy doing what as expected of her. This is not a dichotomy between Mary and Martha, but it is a calling for a recognition that God is working through service and through study and reflection.

So what does Jesus want us to take away from this story? First of all, that we are all made differently. Martha was the active, getting things done, organized type. Mary was reflective, studious and quiet. She wanted to sit at Jesus’ feet and listen. Both of these women loved Jesus in their own right. Some love Jesus by being busy doing the practical things of ministry, like Martha. Nellie Simmons was an 83 year old woman in one of my churches. Nellie came to me early in my ministry at her church and told me she was not much into Bible studies or retreats, but if you need a pot-luck dinner organized and run, she was my Martha. She loved God and her church by doing just that. I never had to worry about a pot-luck meal in that church because I knew Nellie enjoyed serving God in that way. People serve Jesus in different ways.

Second of all, it is easy to be distracted to do good, but neglect the best. Look at Martha. She was living out her obligation to the hilt. What she was doing was absolutely right. But maybe she would have loved to sit at the feet of Jesus. But there was the meal to be prepared. We can’t condemn Martha for that. But there is a call here--a reminder--a warning. There is a tyranny here. The tyranny of the immediate. Most of us are driven to that which has to be done immediately, without giving thought to the overall situation. For many of us there is little

thought of planning ahead. There is no sit down and reflect on decisions that need to be made. We run around just barely staying ahead of the schedule. We rush into events and appointments barely on time if at all. We go to bed exhausted every night wondering if it is all worth it. Don't neglect doing the best for yourself and for others instead of just the good. This leads to the third point.

All of us must find the time and take the time to let our souls catch up with our bodies. Someone once observed that most of the time we are so anxious to do something that we neglect to be someone. The world of getting things done is vital—the world of achievements, hard work, of goals reached and tasks completed. But the world of being is also vital—the world of quiet listening with our inner feelings, the world of meditation and prayer, the world of reflection and encounter.

The story of the two sisters offers us a plea from God to give him some “prime time” some continuous full attention, just like we do with family, friends, and job. God calls us to focus on him when we gather on Sunday, to move from our place of being “worried and distracted by many things”, to one where we are in touch with the one thing needed, the good part that will not be taken away.

Jesus is waiting to give you peace, hope, energy to move forward in being and doing. Sit at his feet sometimes like Mary.