

August 4, 2024

“Following Jesus”
Luke 10:38-42

FCF: The need for clarity as we go

PROPOSITION: (anchor) Jesus shows us what it means to follow Him.
(magnet) We need to heed this - no matter where it leads.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

It's good to have clarity as we go, as we set out on a journey. Many of us have enjoyed a road trip this summer, no doubt relying upon the GPS on our phones as we went. Maybe that's because you were going somewhere new. Or maybe it was a familiar place but you had to take an alternate route. Either way, it's good to know the route to take. I can remember a time years ago when I was trying to get to a meeting at a church in Chicago. This was before the days of GPS devices but I had printed off the directions. Problem was they took me to a subdivision.

It's good to have clarity as we go, as we set out on a journey. We're pressing on in this summer series, “Jesus and the Daughters of Eve.” Thus far, we've been learning from some positive examples. This week, it gets a little complicated as we look at Jesus and two sisters.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Luke 10:38-42](#)**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION****SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

There's much that could be said about this text. Let's start with what we ought not to learn from it. Let me address three misrepresentations. First, Jesus is not negative towards women. It's just the opposite. The pagan view of the time took it for granted that women were inferior to men. Even the Jewish view would not have women on the same footing as men. But we see Jesus continually welcoming and caring for women. Jesus is not negative toward women.

Second, Jesus is not showing disdain for practical acts of service. He is known as “the Suffering Servant” who taught His followers to serve and washed the feet of His disciples. And He calls us to imitate Him still today. Jesus is not showing disdain for practical acts of service.

Third, Jesus is not elevating the contemplative life. The Catholic and Orthodox traditions call for a separation if we are to be serious in pursuing God. Many evangelicals do something similar in creating a separation between the sacred and secular - elevating certain activities and callings over others. Prayer is better than cleaning. Church work is more important than your family or a career. All of that is so misguided. Jesus is not elevating the contemplative life.

So what should we learn here? In this interaction with these two sisters, Jesus is showing us what it means to follow Him. We need to heed this - no matter where it leads. What do we learn about that here? Two things. First, who is welcome. And then, second, how we respond.

I. WHO IS WELCOME

First, who is welcome? This is about men and women and takes us back to Genesis.

A) Truly Distinct

1. To complement

To start with, we are, as men and women, truly distinct. This especially needs to be clearly said in our day. We are not the same. We are not interchangeable. We are meant to complement each other - to add to one another in way that completes. We are incomplete without one another.

2. By design

And this is by design. It is not by accident. It is not a result of the Fall. The Fall and its effects are all too real but that merely damaged the Creator's good design. It in no way destroyed it.

B) Fully Equal

As men and women, we are truly distinct. But we are also fully equal. This too needs to be said just as strongly in our day. And it is demonstrated through this exchange in Luke 10.

1. The posture of Mary

Note the posture of Mary. Jesus enters the house and started to teach. Mary sat at His feet and began to listen. Anyone in that 1st century world would have recognized this as the posture of a disciple. Meaning that she is every bit as much a disciple as any of the men present there.

2. The rebuke of Jesus

Note the posture of Mary. And note the rebuke of Jesus. Where is it directed? Not at Mary but gently at Martha as she was trying to draw her sister into the kitchen. Note the rebuke of Jesus.

Who is welcome? We cannot emphasize this enough, wherever it may lead.

Application:

Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet, listening and learning from Him. And Jesus commends her for it. A word here to the women in the room. Be encouraged. Be encouraged to do the same. Even at this moment, Jesus gladly welcomes you and defends your right to be there at His feet.

But a word to the men in the room as well. Does that welcome make you uncomfortable? Does that invitation to women from Jesus make you nervous? Why? It's worth asking. Do you feel the same about Mary? Are you then willing to argue with Jesus? Think about it, brothers.

Jesus shows us what it means to follow Him. And that includes who is welcomed.

II. HOW WE RESPOND

Which brings us to this, how we respond. What does it look like to follow Jesus? What are to be our heart's reasons and deep motivations? Here we shift to Jesus' words to Martha.

A) The Problem of Distraction

1. Flawed motives

Let's start with the problem of distraction. Martha suffers here from flawed motives. She is "cumbered" (KJV), She is off target, diverted from her better purpose. She is doing all the right things for the wrong reasons. Note that Jesus rebukes her not for what she was doing but why.

2. Unable to be hidden

And those flawed motives cannot be hidden. She is anxious and troubled, restless and distressed. There's a cauldron of pride and self-pity stirring within her. "Look at what I'm doing." Where is

her focus? She wants sympathy, commendation. She's owed this. "Lord, don't you care?" That accusation is then followed by a command - not to Mary but Jesus. "Tell her to help me!" You see how things have gone sideways for her. What's in the heart always comes out in some way.

B) The Need for Essentials

Which then brings us to Jesus' gentle words to Martha (**READ Luke 10:41-42**).

1. Not about doing

Jesus calls Martha away from the distraction to the essentials. It's not about doing. It's not about hosting and feeding. It's not about seeing great needs and doing great things. Even for God.

2. But about being

It's not about doing but about being. Jesus will build His church. He will bring His kingdom. We are to simply avail ourselves. That's it. Our greatest need is not to be about His work. Our greatest need is to be about Him, our good portion. The work then naturally flows from that.

How are we to respond? What are our motivations? We cannot emphasize this enough.

Application:

It's worth knowing that we can go awry with either the response of Martha or Mary, with either serving or sitting. What then should we do? Serve or sit? It depends. It depends on the need of the moment. Whatever we do, it needs to be the right thing in the right way. It depends on the true motive of your heart. And it will eventually show itself - especially when you don't get the notice and attention you feel you deserve, when we don't get the praise of others. Not getting that praise might be a real kindness, a real kindness of the Lord to us, a corrective.

How then can we keep from slipping into this? How do we keep from going there?

CONCLUSION:

That brings us to the clear and ongoing need for us to be abiding with Jesus - as a branch draws its life from the vine. We need to be looking to Him, learning from Him, leaning upon Him - spending time with Him. Which means that, before we set out to do a thing for Him, we need to let Him do something for us. We need recalibration. Some of you know I'm driving back and forth every few weeks from TN to VA. That means crossing into different time zones and the need to reset my watch. It's easy to forget to do that and not know when you are. For the ancient mariners as they made their way across the wide open seas, they had to rely upon a compass. At times, those compasses needed to be recalibrated so the ships would stay on course. Without that, being just a few degrees off could take you to places you had no desire to go.

My friends, we continually need to have our internal compass recalibrated. That's partly what we have here with the Lord's Supper. Through the words and images, we are reminded of our Savior. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we are reassured of His sacrifice and our security. "Why is this good news?" Who we are, how it came about, and what all that means for us now is brought home anew and afresh each time we do this, as we look to Jesus in faith.

That's what the Apostle Paul is after in 1 Corinthians 11 ([READ 1 Corinthians 11:23-29](#)). Who is this for? For the one who, whether they are sitting or serving, is resting in Jesus. For the one who truly believes in what we professed earlier in the Apostles' Creed - and is growing in what that means. Please understand, if you are visiting with us this morning and that doesn't describe you, you should feel no pressure to do this with us. It simply isn't for you yet.

But if you are a professing Christian and you know yourself to be in willful rebellion against the Lord in some area of your life, then Paul's words to you are clear. You should feel pressure, pressure not to take of this either. You should feel pressure, given the reality of this, the reality of your relationship with your Lord and Savior, to repent and take of this next time.

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