

Sermon July 1st - Text Luke 10:38-42

Martha and Mary

Grace and peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. All of us have images of dinner parties that we have attended. Over the years, I have been invited to numerous dinners. Getting to know the Pastor type of occasions. Reminds me of a cute story.

A young couple invited their Pastor for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, the Pastor engaged their younger son in conversation. After getting almost non-verbal responses to questions about school, sports, likes, and dislikes, the Pastor asked what they were having for dinner.

“Goat”, the young boy replied. “Goat?” said the Pastor. “Are you sure about that?” Yes, said the youngster. I heard Dad say to Mom, “We might as well have the old Goat for dinner today as any other day.”

I remember dinner scenes as I was growing up. Not as dramatic as the scene in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* starring Sidney Poitier, but instructive all the same. My mother was a good cook. If you watched ‘I remember Mama’ in the 1950's, you would know that all people from the Holy Land were good cooks. What I remember most about those dinner occasions was that my mother was almost always half there.

What I mean is that she sat sideways, never really engaged in the conversation. She would be checking the table, seeing if she needed to fill up the mashed potatoes, or fill water glasses or offer more coffee. She was a kind of waitress. While everyone else was in a relaxed mode, she was working.

Kind of like our lives? Isn't it. Today our lives are periods of hectic activities and chaos. But perhaps you have been too busy to notice. Years ago when someone worked 40 hours, they worked 40 hours. Now, it is not that unusual to hear of people working 50 and 60 hours. But it's not just our schedules that are crazy, we have our children in so many activities that they can hardly breathe. Music lessons, soccer practice, mission trips, summer jobs, and a myriad of other stuff

and our children have little time to be children. Add to that the nutty sports travel teams and there is a problem.

Added to this dilemma is modern technology. This was supposed to give us more free time. But the opposite has happened. Because of technology, we are almost never off the clock. We constantly check e-mails, and twitter, and Facebook. Our children seem to have a phone constantly attached to their arm. I remember when, on one of those rare occasions all 4 of my children were gathered in our sunroom. I figured that I would share some important stuff to all of them at one time. It didn't work. They were all on their phones. The point is, when do we take a breath?

Enter the Gospel for today. Jesus has been invited to the home of Martha and Mary, good friends of Jesus. In fact, their brother Lazarus was one of Jesus' closest friends. By the time Jesus arrives, Mary is relaxed and anticipating conversation with her rabbi. Martha is a wreck. She was like my mother. Working in the kitchen, getting the meat in the oven, getting coffee ready, washing water glasses, cutting flowers for the table, and generally obsessing with making sure everything is perfect. She missed out on all the refreshment and conversation that her sister Mary enjoyed. By the time dinner was over and she is cleaning up it is obvious that Martha is frustrated. "Jesus, don't you care that Mary is sitting there while I am slaving away? Tell her to help me!" Rather than scold Mary, Jesus says that Mary has chosen the better path.

Wow! But here is what Jesus is not saying. He is not saying that the tasks we do are not important. He is not saying that our serving others is not important. What he is saying that in this particular place and time Mary listening to Jesus is the better path.

Which hopefully will lead us to the kernel we can take from this Gospel lesson. Jesus is inviting us to take a breath and carve out some time to listen to Jesus. We call that Worship or Sabbath time. The crazy thing is that here at Our Saviors we have about 24% worshipping on a weekly basis. All the rest are Marthas of the world. And for those of us who are sitting in the pews, like my mother, we are sitting sideways. Thinking about stuff we have to do when we race home from church.

So, let's try something different today. After this homily the organist will play some soft music. We will pause and meditate for a few moments. We will soak up the words of Jesus. We will choose the better part. We will remember the phrase, Be Still and Know That I Am God. Kind of funny, in Norway after the benediction, the congregation sits and reflects. Pauses. That's what we need to do. Pause and remember what Jesus has done for us and how much he loves us. No looking at phones while we pause.

Be Mary for a few moments.

Amen- let it be so.