

Sermon- Our Saviors Lutheran Church - July 21, 2019

Text - Luke 10:38-42

### A Wake-Up Call from God

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. We have in front of us a wonderful Gospel lesson today. It's from the Gospel of Luke. One of the four books that we call Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They are called Gospels because they contain Good News - the actual words and stories of Jesus.

Let's begin today with a question. How many women are named in the Gospels? (Possible answers - Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Martha and Mary. Not an exhaustive list.) Part of the reason is that the Gospels were all written by men. This Gospel today invokes the phrase "that's not fair". So let's unpack the story and see what Jesus is trying to tell us.

On the surface, it is a rather simple Gospel. The big guy, Jesus, is coming to dinner at 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 friend and rabbi. Martha however is a wreck. She has been working for hours; getting the meat ready, cleaning the house, washing water and wine glasses, cutting flowers for the table, and generally obsessing with making sure everything is perfect. Boy, can we relate.

I think back to scenes from my childhood. As a 1<sup>st</sup> generation son of immigrant parents from the Holy Land, and although we lived in a four room small apartment, I remember many dinners hosted at our abode. 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

constantly checking the table, seeing if she needed to bring out more baked cod (Norwegians eat a lot of fish), filling up the bowl of mashed potatoes (we always had mashed potatoes), fill water glasses or offer more coffee. (Norskes drink a lot of coffee). She was a kind of a waitress. While everybody else was relaxed, she was working. Yes we can relate!

Think about the last time that someone visited your home. Perhaps you spent days or even weeks before their arrival getting ready: cleaning, cooking, grocery shopping, doing laundry, restoring order. Sometimes the process of getting ready for the arrival of guests can leave us too exhausted to enjoy their visit. The point is, like Martha, we are busy, very busy, not some of the time but almost all of the time.

Added to our dilemma about being busy is the advent of sports and travel teams. If you are a parent or grandparent of a youngster in sports you know what I am talking about. I have a grandson who is a three sport athlete at the University of Kimberly. Even now this summer, every night, I could attend a Legion baseball game, a varsity summer basketball game and football starts in a few weeks. And most of us are Uber drivers for these events. When I grew up and left the apartment to play sports with my friends, my mother would only say, "be home at 5:30 for dinner."

We also have additional distractions that Martha didn't have. We now have phones that feel smarter than we are, phones designed to make sure we are constantly checking them. We are constantly checking the headlines, or Facebook, or Snapchat, or doing online shopping so that we are too busy to interact with humans. How many times have you gone out to dinner and noticed the family seated near you? All of them on their devices - not talking. A familiar scene.

Let's get back to the Gospel. 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 is that in this particular place and time Mary listening to Jesus is the better way. Which hopefully is the kernel we can take from this Gospel lesson.

Jesus is inviting us to take a breath and carve out some time in our days and weeks and listen to Him, to talk with Jesus. We might call that worship or Sabbath time. The crazy thing is that only about 22% of us here at OSLC find the time on a weekly basis to communicate with Jesus. Maybe the rest are Marthas of the world.

Maybe, as I suggested as the title of this homily, this is a Wake Up Call from God. During this call perhaps we could ask Jesus some questions!

What do you want me to do with my life?

How can I be a better follower?

How do I listen for the voice of Jesus each day?

Can I rearrange my priorities?

The truth is that every one of us are busy and yet do have enough time to talk with God.

Can we do it? Of course we can! Jesus is just waiting for us to begin.

Let's try to be Mary and choose the better path.

Amen. Let it be so.

