

# Sermon Outline

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## HOW DO GOOD THINGS BECOME BAD? (LUKE 10:38-42)

**Sermon idea:** *Because Jesus regards communion with Him a necessity for service, we must give it priority over all other legitimate activities for the Lord.*

### I Introduction

### II Because Jesus regard communion with Him a necessity, we must choose it to prevent distraction by other legitimate activity. (v 38-41)

#### A. Context

1. Jesus and his disciples are on the way to Jerusalem. (9:51)
2. There Martha welcomed Jesus into her home.

#### B. Issue of contention arises

1. When Jesus entered into the home.
2. Between Martha and Mary
3. Jesus taught them a lesson on priority in the service of God.

#### C. Relevance of lesson in the larger context

1. Incident connects Chap 10 and 11.
2. Chap 10 has 2 events that Jesus commented and taught his hearers that this particular incident reflects upon
3. Then this small section at the end of Chap 10 introduces 1st part of Chap 11 on prayer and reliance on the Spirit to do God's work.

#### D. Let us look at Martha's welcome

1. Everything started well. Martha welcomed Jesus into her house. Her house suggests she was in charge of the household.
2. Like any home, the guest would be invited to sit inside the one-room house and make themselves comfortable. Martha obviously took charge of the hospitality. She would have instructed Mary to keep Jesus company and get him to a drink while she went into the kitchen area or just outside the house to prepare some food.

#### E. Martha was disgruntled

1. Then the atmosphere suddenly changed
  - Martha attitude took a nose dive. She was disgruntled, upset and murmuring.
2. Martha was disgruntled
  - She felt Mary was uncaring and selfish. Left her to serve alone.
  - Hospitality is a good. The trouble with us Christians, is we make good things become bad.

#### F. Martha was distracted

1. Martha now complained and accused publicly
2. Martha was distracted
  - *Right things done for the wrong reason do not help to build the internal quality of christian character.* C S Lewis

### **III Because Jesus regard communion with Him a necessity, we choose it over other legitimate activity. (v 39,40, 42)**

- A. Let us learn from Mary. What was she doing in comparison?
- B. Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus
  - 1. She was not making small talk with Jesus at his disciples
  - 2. It appeared that the moment Jesus came into the house, it did not take him long before he started to preach and teach.
  - 3. When Mary realized that Jesus was teaching, she chose to sit at the feet of Jesus feet and listened to his teaching.
- C. Mary was listening to Jesus teaching
  - 1. Sitting at Lord's feet
  - 2. Listening to Jesus
    - *By her attentive hearing Mary helped to make the seat of Jesus a pulpit, her own humble place at his feet a pew, and the whole room a chapel in which the mercy of Jehovah was proclaimed, yea, a very sanctuary where God himself drew nigh to the sinful heart with grace.* Lenski
- D. Mary's chose the good portion
  - 1. Unusual for a woman in first-century Judaism to be accepted by a teacher as a disciple.
  - 2. Fair to say that at the beginning she was helping Martha but decided otherwise when Jesus began to teach. She left Martha as she had said and chose to stay with Jesus.
  - 3. Mary could have said the reverse to Jesus, couldn't she. That Martha should be there listening rather just overwhelmed with doing.

### **IV Because Jesus regard communion with Him a necessity, we choose it only by God's grace. (v 41-42)**

- A. Listen to Jesus
- B. Jesus' gracious in response
  - 1. In response to Martha's rude allegation and accusation
  - 2. Martha, Martha – the reiteration is one of empathy. Like O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Martha, Martha - why are you so anxious and troubled
  - 3. What a shepherd we have. So full of grace. *“No earthly father loves like thee, No mother half so mild, Bears and forbears, as thou hast done, With me, thy sinful child.”*
- C. Jesus was gentle in reproof
  - 1. That did not stop Jesus from exposing Martha's weakness.
  - 2. Jesus was not chiding Martha for her service
  - 3. Martha, I know you are doing all this for me. I love you for that.
    - *Martha saw too much the recipient, too little the Giver; too much the object of her motherly care, too little the great Host who cares for us all.* Lenski
  - 4. She wanted to give Him the best the house could afford. That's not wrong. In her zeal to honour and serve Jesus, she got carried away with activity.
- D. Choosing the good part only by God's grace alone
  - 1. As much as we are to be doers of the word, the making of a disciple of Christ is not just about doing and doing. Their service and activity must first be born out of sitting at the feet of Jesus.
    - *It is only when by God's grace we have become the right sort of people—his people, by the new birth—that we begin to do the right sort of things. It is not the other way around.* John Stott
  - 2. The one thing needful, the good part to be chosen is to listen to the blessed, saving, soul-satisfying Word of Christ. But it is a choice we have to make.

- Where this is chosen all else follows; joy and rest in Jesus in serving God. It delivers us from being anxious, troubled and disgruntled
  - Where this is set aside and neglected all else is useless, empty, deceptive, vain.
3. Jesus did not let Martha take away that part from Mary. Mary would then end up in a distracted condition like Martha.
  4. Are we too busy doing? Do we still have a thousand legitimate things to do and to finish but no quiet time for the Scriptures, for prayer, or for public worship.
  5. “No choice”. Is that really true. Is it not a myth. Or is it I am afraid to let go and lose out to my colleagues and contemporary. Jam 4:17 *So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin*

## **VI Tying the ends**

### **A. The priority in service of God**

1. The Lord’s people can be distracted in the service of God when the priority of doing is placed over listening to the teaching of Jesus and communion with Him.
2. The Lord’s people can become discouraged, disillusioned and disgruntled in the service of God. They start off with the best of intentions. But without regular time with Jesus, they soon lose steam.
3. There is no religion other than Christianity that emphasizes the fine balance and essential linkage between pietism and activism. Between fervent communion with Him and actively serving Him. It is either ascetism and isolationism or it is activism and works.
4. In a church like ours where there is much teaching, there is a tendency for us to think that we can just go, go, go incessantly without stopping to listen, We think we can survive on what knowledge we have accumulated.

### **B. The essence of service for God**

1. The Lord is concerned about our commitment to God rather than our achievement for God.
2. Our commitment to the Lord is based on a healthy, fervent, vibrant and dependent relationship with the Lord
3. We have always lamented that we are limited by our numbers. But I say to you changed hearts, devoted, dedicated and committed hearts are far more powerful instruments than sheer numbers.

May God grant us grace to serve joyfully out of quiet time with Him.

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