

## Sermon for July 21, 2013

### Ninth Sunday of Pentecost, Luke 10:38-42

BLESSINGS TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD THE FATHER, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Today we live in a crazy, hectic, and fast paced world. I am **rather** sure I am **not** telling you something that you **did not** already know. Incidents of depression, anxiety, and stress are at an **all time** high. There are **so** many things to distract us in our everyday lives. Show of hands—how many of you get distracted during the course of your day? (Wait for hands.)

Right now I would like to do something that is a little bit different for us Lutherans—I would like you to **call out to me** what some of your distractions are. First, **I** will get us started—many times when I come here to church in the morning during the week, I have **every** intention of just unlocking my office door and then coming into this sanctuary to sit and be with **God** for a few minutes before I begin my day. I have to be **honest**—rarely does that happen. I **walk** into my office, there is a **blinking light** on my phone which distracts me, my **computer** is right there—emails to be looked at and answered, maybe there are **things laying around** my office which need tending to, there are many things which pull at me and take my mind away from my intention **of sitting** with God for a few **precious** moments. These are **all** distractions which **pull me** from God. Now, **tell me**—how about

you—what distracts **you** or draws **your** attention away from God? (Wait for some answers.)

Our **gospel** reading for today is about distractions which take us away from that which is **truly** important—namely **paying attention** to God working in our lives and the **promise** of eternal life. It is about the **distractions** which took Martha's focus away from what Jesus said was "*the better part*". But **hold on**—didn't Martha **appear** to be doing the **right thing** by serving Jesus—she welcomed him into her home, she was preparing a meal for him, she was being the hostess, she was being the one who was concerned that all was made right and after all; it **was** the *woman's* place to pay attention to hospitality for a guest. And she gets **chastised** for this??

And **wait a minute!! Just wait a minute!!** For the last **2** weeks have we **not** heard Jesus telling the 70 that he sent out to go out with nothing and rely on the hospitality of those whose house they entered? And last week did we **not** just hear of the parable of the **Good Samaritan** where the man lying on the side of road was taken care of and shown hospitality from the Samaritan who was passing by?

So why this week do you suppose that Martha would get pretty much **reprimanded** for asking for Mary's help with the work because, in all honesty, if we did **not** have the **hospitality** of the Martha's in this world we would be in trouble. Just **think** about what our women's groups do here at Eden. If they did

not come in **early** in the morning-or the **day before** an event, **decorate** the Fellowship Hall, **set** the tables, **prepare** the coffee, **bring** the cookies or treats for Sunday morning **what** would we have? **No** decorations, **no** coffee, **no** juice, **no** water, **no** treats. If Martha would have **not** prepared a meal that evening for Jesus and his disciples **what** would they have had to eat? The Martha's of this world **are** indispensable.

Jesus' response to Martha's concern regarding **Mary's lack of help** and basically **ordering** Jesus to tell Mary to come and help her with all this work was, *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."* There is **distraction** from what is **truly** important rearing its ugly head again.

For you see, the **real** issue here was **not** that Martha was **not** being a good hostess it was that she was letting it distract her from being fully present with Jesus. Her **preoccupation** with being hospitable and being the **perfect** hostess was taking her attention away from the thing which could never be taken away from her—which is eternal life. The things which **commanded** Martha's attention, devotion, and passion were **not** the things that demanded her ultimate attention, her ultimate devotion, and her ultimate passion. The things that Martha was concerned about all come to an end; all our concerns and those things which **distract us** will

**all come to an end.** We tend to hold on to our **primary** concerns as if they carry the **utmost** importance. For us, in the **short span** of our lives, **many** of these concerns may have **already** disappeared and **new** ones have emerged which **also** will eventually disappear.

You see, **that** was the key!!! **Mary** had gotten it right. She was looking toward the **eternal** and she was taking the chance to **sit** at the feet of Jesus, to **sit** at the feet of God himself and **listen** to what He was saying. How many times would this opportunity be afforded to them? How **awesome** it must have been to be able to sit at the **feet** of Jesus and listen, to **just listen** and to **hang onto** every word.

I remember **one** time when my parents came to visit me. They were already living in Arizona and I **guess** I was like Martha; I was **very** concerned about having the house look just “so”. I suppose I wanted to impress them with my **domestic** abilities. When they got to my house we got to talking and my mom **said** to me, “I did not come here to see how clean your house was, I came to spend time and talk to you.” That has stayed with me all these years and now I would give **anything** if my mom were here and **she and I** could just **sit and talk** and I could **listen to her wisdom** once again.

Worldly distractions **do** get in the way. What **truly** matters in this world is our **relationship** with our creator God. Through the relationship we have with God—**Jesus**—His **one and only** Son—teaches us a different way to live and to serve.

Being at the **feet** of Jesus and **learning** is the better part because it is where we can **learn** how God's love frees us from the distractions of this world, it is where we can learn how we can have a relationship with a God who loves us, it is where we can learn that where we go God goes with us, it is where we can learn about eternal life, and it is where we can learn about how our God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Each Sunday we come here, **many** of us distracted, disconnected, and weary from the ways of the world. We come to hear the **Word** preached where Jesus **renews our lives and builds His church**, we come to give praise and glory to God, we come to have our sins forgiven, we come to confess our faith, we come to recall our baptismal promises, and we come to receive Holy Communion. Then **once again** we are **sent out** into this crazy, hectic, and fast paced world of ours to remember that God is there with us always **even in the midst** of those things which distract us. All thanks be to God. **AMEN.**