

J.J.

PRIORITY ONE
Luke 10:38-42

INTRODUCTION :

Every morning when I bring my kids to school, Mica and I have a game that we play. The person who sees the most number of yellow cars wins. But it's not just about telling the other person that they saw a yellow car, they need to poke the other person with her finger.

My daughter always wins. It's because she's so focused on the road watching out for yellow cars while I'm so distracted with a lot of things running in my mind.

Luke 10: 38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Pray

This is one of the most familiar stories in the Bible and I know you've heard this preached one time or another whether from another preacher or from the radio or from TV. We all know the story and we now associate the name Martha to someone in the church who is so busy with a lot of things and etc etc.

But the story is not just about Martha being busy with other things **but more importantly, it's about what is priority #1 as Christians.**

The story is so simple to understand and the lesson is so easy to learn and that is by God's grace, we just want to share.

Before we do that, let me help define to you the word "priority". It comes from the word "prior" which means something that happens before another thing happened.

Example : I am preaching right now but prior to this, I drove from Brampton Mississauga.

So priority means, a certain thing needs to happen before anything else happen.

It doesn't mean that other things are not important but what God is saying that this is the most important. **In short, before you do anything else, you should do this first.**

And what is the priority of a Christian?

who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

So today, we'll talk about

The Definition of prayer
The Distraction to praying
The Decision to pray

I. Definition of prayer

Quote : At the risk of making it simplistic, **Prayer is connecting with God.**
It's not just about talking to God, it's about connecting with Him.

Example : I may be talking to you right now but I might not be connecting with you.

That's why Jesus will sometimes say to those listening,

He who has ears, let him hear! (Matthew 11:15; Matthew 13:9; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8; Luke 14:35)

Because, you might be hearing what I'm saying right now but it's not really going inside your heart.

Communication needs connection.

So the question is, how do we connect with God?

a.) It takes desire to connect with God.

and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

Etymology : welcomed "hypodechomai" hypo "over" dechomai "to receive", to "over-receive",

In short, Martha started well because she was eager and happy to welcome Jesus into her house. She wants Jesus to come into her house.

Do you desire to be with the Lord right now or would you rather be somewhere else?

And to desire something or someone, it's because you find something beautiful in that something or someone.

That's why David said,

Psalm 27:4 One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

Illustration : Husbands and wives, do you remember the time you were in the courting stage? You savour each word that comes from the mouth of your partner. But now, when the other person is talking, you are either texting or Facebooking or playing on your phone.

b.) It takes commitment to connect with God.

And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

Historical context : It's taboo for women during that time to sit near a rabbi. They should be standing at the back. But Mary didn't mind what other people would say, SHE GRABBED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIT AT JESUS' FEET AND STAY THERE. She doesn't mind what other people would say.

To sit at someone's feet means you've committed yourself to connect with that person because you placed yourself as close as possible to that person.

Illustration : You remember the story when I attend church not as a preacher but as a listener, I always make sure that I sit as close to the pulpit as possible because I've committed myself to listen to God and therefore connect with Him. Yes, just like everyone else, I become sleepy but I fight it because I don't want to lose any opportunity for God to speak to my heart.

Summarize : To connect with God means to desire Him because you know you will benefit from it. And then to commit to it. That's why we encourage you to have some "devotion" time or "loving time" with God everyday. But you need to desire it first and if you don't have that desire, ask God.

Illustration : We have an almost nightly ritual at our house before going to bed. Usually, Chicay and Mica or Bexy will be in our bed first and when Zak or me are still downstairs, they will be shouting "Lambingan!!!" (cuddling time). Then all of us we'll be running upstairs and we will be all in this small bed, cuddling and then talking and connecting with each other. And then we will be praying as a family.

Sometimes, God is calling "Lambingan!!!" to us and you know that's God tugging at your heart for you to connect with him.

II. Distraction To Praying

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

Etymology : distracted "perispao" "peri" around "spao" to draw, to pull from

Note : We have so many distractions that's pulling us away from God, when our priority # 1 should be God.

Again, we're not saying that others are not important but before anything else, JESUS MUST BE #1.

Two signs that you are distracted and preventing Priority #1.

1. You now see praying as a duty.

You see what happened to Martha, she welcomed Jesus with open arms and desired him but since she was so distracted, she doesn't enjoy now the presence of Jesus. She now sees it as a burden.

In our language, "naging pabigat na si Lord,"

2. You are now defocused.

"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

You see here, Martha's guest is the Lord himself and now she's looking at her sister and is agitated that she's not doing anything. Instead of looking at the Lord, she's looking at other things.

HER FOCUS IS OFF. She's now focusing on the job that needs to be done and she's now focusing on other people not helping her on the job that needs to be done.

We are looking at Martha here? How about you? Are you distracted when it comes Priority #1?

Note : I've told the students here before start of the school to W.o.W., Walk on Water and the secret to that is to focus on Jesus.

Two things that cause distractions when it comes to our connecting with God

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

1. You are thinking too much about other things

Etymology : worried, careful (KJV); "merimnao" from merizo, "to divide into parts, to cut into pieces"

Note : It's not saying that it's not important to think of things but if you're already worrying about it and making scenarios in your mind (that's what you do when you worry, you are already making scenarios of negative things that could happen), then that's not good already.

Illustration : You lose a job and then you are now playing negative scenarios ten steps ahead. What if I don't get a job? Then I can't pay my mortgage, then they'll take away my house and then we'll be on the streets and etc etc.

That's why Jesus said,

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.

2. You are thinking about too many things.

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

Etymology : troubled "thorybazo" from thorybos (noun) noise, persons wailing, clamorous or excited multitude

Isn't that what happens to you sometimes that distracts you from praying or even in the middle of your praying? There's just so many things running on your mind that you think you need to do. You're not worried but you are thinking you need to do this and then it goes to that crush of yours, then it goes to your sinning, then it goes to your mother-in-law, then it goes to that noise in the car that you need to get fixed.

All of these are preventing you to pray, to connect with God.

Memory verse : the answer to the distraction of worry (thinking too much) and trouble (thinking about too many things)

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you (answer to worry), all whose thoughts are fixed on you (answer to trouble). ESV

III. Decision to pray

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Two things to consider :

1. You need to concur that prayer is Priority #1.

But one thing is needed,

God has said that this is priority #1 but it's only you who can decide if you want to believe it or not.

For example, we sing this song :

*Psalm 84:10 Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere*

Do you concur?

2. You need to choose to pray

Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Life is about choices.

Example : You decided to go to church this morning. It's your choice even if your husband or your wife convinced you. But it's going to be an easy choice if you believe that it is the "good part" of your life.

And to choose to connect with Jesus Christ means it's the good part. (agathos).

Why would you leave out the good part in your life? It doesn't make sense.

And when you choose to pray, Jesus is saying, *will not be taken away from her.*

Very important : It means whenever you choose to pray, He will always be there.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PRAYER AND FASTING

1. Prayer and fasting must be done out of love and joy.

Matthew 6: 16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

2. You can decide on what you want to fast about e.g. skipping a meal, 2 meals, 3 meals or if you can't afford to skip a meal, you can fast on something else. E.g. something that you usually do for entertainment and you decide to forego it and spend it in prayer.

3. Prayer and fasting is not twisting God's arm to do our will but to say to God, "Lord your will is much more important to me than food or your usual form of entertainment.

Through the years that we have done this, I noticed that only a handful actually prayed and fasted when the church called for it. I encourage everyone to join in this. It's good spiritual discipline that's good for you.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR P1 INITIATIVE

While we're having fellowship, Jannette has a form that will ask you to sign up for a time slot where you will be praying for three things : (you can take a picture if you like)

- DCF and all its ministries :
Pastor, Elders, Men, Women, Youth, Young Adults, Children
- Churches in Canada
- Persecuted Churches in the world

It means, now you will reserve that time for you to pray, even if you're working, e.g. you choose, you will pray between 9-10 a.m., while typing or sweeping the floor, you can choose to stop a little, 10 minutes and just pray for the three things or you can pray for it while working just as long as it doesn't pose a danger to your work.

I won't tell you what to specifically pray for about these three initiatives, let the Spirit guide you.

JESUS BLESS OUR P1 INITIATIVE

S.G.D.