

Priorities

by Francois Carr

This sermon emphasizes the concept of distractions in life, drawing parallels from the story of Martha and Mary in Bethany. It highlights the importance of prioritizing Jesus above all distractions, sitting at His feet to listen and receive His blessings that are everlasting and transformative.

Scripture: Luke 10:38, Matthew 6:33, Psalm 46:10, Philippians 4:6, John 10:27

Topics: "Distractions", "Prioritizing Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

What is a distraction? It is something that takes our attention away from what we are supposed to be doing. The meaning of this word in Greek is literally to be pulled in every direction. Henry Nolan is a famous author and theologian.

He once said that while he was driving through Los Angeles, he felt as if he were driving through a giant dictionary. Words everywhere. Sounds everywhere.

Signs everywhere. All saying, use me, take me, buy me, drink me, smell me, touch me, kiss me, and even sleep with me. Just words everywhere.

Distractions. One after the other. We all face that one time or another in our lives.

When I think about Bethany, it is not just a home away from home for Jesus or a place of transformation and change because of a moment and an encounter and a word from the Lord Jesus that Mary and Martha experienced, but it is also a place that deals with the issue of priorities in our lives and how to deal with distractions. In Luke chapter 10, when Jesus shows up in Bethany to spend some time with Martha and with Mary, Mary rushed to sit at the feet of Jesus and just to be with him while Martha was fixing food in the kitchen. I can even imagine myself like Martha to be concerned about so many things because there is Jesus with his disciples and they need to fix some coffee and something to eat and dessert and there is the main meal and all the things need to be prepared and even bread needs to be baked and who will sit where on the table and who will help me.

Before long she was distracted of trying to fix the food and with this concern that becomes an attitude in her heart of all the things that need to be done. Her kitchen became a distraction for her. Sometimes when we think about life as it happens with you and with I, we all face the same kind of things like that.

That will take our attention away from what is really important in your life and also in my life. When I look at this passage, I believe there are three things which is very important. The first one is that the Lord Jesus should always be our first priority before anything else.

When Jesus entered that house, Mary, the first thing that she was doing, she gave Jesus her undivided attention. She stopped what she was doing because the master had arrived and she wanted to be with him. It made me think about Nicholas Herman who was a monk who worked in the kitchen of a monastery in Paris many years ago.

He became known as brother Lawrence. He wrote a little book called The Practice of the Presence of God. He once said the following, I'm reading, he said, I have looked on God as the goal and the end of all the thoughts and affections of the soul.

I've come to see that my only business is to live as though there were none but he and I in this world. I've sought only to live for him. The first priority in your life and mine should be that Jesus gets our undivided attention.

And secondly, is to sit at his feet and listen to his voice and hear what he is saying to us. What is on his heart for you and for I today? And lastly, if we give him our full attention and if we sit at his feet to listen to his voice and hearing him speak to us, receiving his word, we will receive also a blessing that will not be taken away from us. He said, I will give you something which will, the good that will not be taken away from you.

If you're struggling with anxiety and you come to Jesus and he gives you Philippians chapter four, verse six to nine, he gives you peace. If you need wisdom and he gives you an answer, you receive the wisdom that you need. It will not be taken away from you.

So whatever your need might be, if you come to Jesus and he speaks to you, he answers you, he touches you by sitting at his feet, you will receive a blessing from him that will not be taken away from you. So what is the kitchen that withholds you from sitting at the feet of Jesus or to be so concerned about many things that you cannot give your undivided attention to the one, to the master, to the one that loves you so much. Can it be your own goals, your career, your own success, the pursuing of that, could it be sin, relationships, whatever the case might be, it could be anything.

The kitchen from Martha became a distraction, but with you and I, it might be a football, it might be a basketball, it might be a relationship, it might be something else completely, but it takes us away, almost like pulling us in different directions. When I think about Bethany, this was the place where Jesus was actually saying and teaching what he was modeling himself by sitting at the feet of his own father, by giving his father the undivided attention that he so deserved from his son. And because of that, his father also gave something that could not be taken away from Jesus.

He said, this is my beloved son and the father used him to become the savior of the rest of this world that we will celebrate this coming few days. I want to close by just reading a quote hundreds of years later after brother Lawrence. Joy Davidman, the wife of C.S. Lewis, she said it this way, to want God so much that

everything else becomes irrelevant.

So Bethany, a place which is called a home away from home, a place of transformation and change, a place of surrender when Mary was washing the feet of Jesus, anointing with oil and with her hair, but also a place that deals with distractions and what is really important in your life and mine, the priorities of life, is to give our undivided attention to our master, to sit long enough at his feet to listen to his voice and to hear his word, understand his heart, his message, to receive a blessing from him that cannot be taken away from us. May God bless you in this day as you reflect upon Bethany and as you prepare yourself for these coming days where Jesus is about to enter into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. May God bless you until we see you again.

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