

St. Mary's Sermons

Date of Sermon: 1st April 2020

Luke 10:38-42

New Living Translation (NLT)

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

³⁸ As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

⁴¹ But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Those of you like me who are activists, can feel very frustrated with those who are energised by quietness and reflection because to us they appear to be lazy. Not only that, you're left feeling annoyed by Jesus' response to Martha! But Jesus was very clear, Mary had chosen what was best and he wasn't going to stop her. The Westminster catechism reminds us that our primary purpose is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. So I am having to learn *again* that we are primarily human **beings**, not human **doings**, and resist the temptation, however compelling, to get up and do something – anything (even tidy the garage!) and simply wait instead in the presence of the Lord.

Reading the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus it soon becomes very clear that his ministry flowed out of his intimate relationship with his Father. For example, He spent the whole night in prayer before choosing his disciples.

Now we have no excuse not to spend more time in prayer and worship developing our relationship with God. One of the benefits that just might come out of this is, that we might be able to hear God speak to us more clearly and see him blessing others more powerfully through us.

Personally, I find R. A. Torrey's comments very challenging, "We are too busy to pray, so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity but accomplish little; many services but few conversions." The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, made prayer one of his three top priorities prior to his enthronement. He said, "Without prayer there will be no renewal of the church, and without a renewal of the church there is very little hope for the world".

In recent times Bishop Paul has frequently quoted a conversation he had with a churchwarden who said to him, "Prayer, not despair, is how Christians should respond in times like these". This quote has never been more apt.

Many of us feel powerless, sat at home trying to do our bit and comply with the current restrictions, and desire to do something. The most powerful and effective thing that we possibly can do is to pray. But then, perhaps many of us are left wondering just how do we pray in the current crisis? I'll say more on that in my next article, but before we get too hard on ourselves let's not forget that even the disciples had to ask Jesus to teach them to pray. So then, that perhaps is not a bad place to start!

To be in your presence
To sit at your feet
When your love surrounds me
And makes me complete

This is my desire, o Lord
This is my desire
This is my desire, o Lord
This is my desire

To rest in your presence
Not rushing away
To cherish each moment
Here I would stay

This is my desire, o Lord
This is my desire
This is my desire, o Lord
This is my desire