



“Living in the Overflow”
Luke 10:38-42

Idea: Before verbalizing the gospel message or caring for the needs of others, Christians must first take time to be with Jesus.

Intro: Happy Easter! What we celebrate this morning, was no accident. Jesus warned His disciples multiple times of what awaited Him in Jerusalem. He said in Luke 9:22, *“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”* Today, on this Easter Sunday, we celebrate the culmination of His glorious and sacrificial work upon the cross, for the Bible tells us that Jesus did not remain in the grave. On the third day, on Sunday morning, our Savior was raised from the dead. God the Father, signifying that He had accepted the atoning sacrifice of God the Son, resurrected Jesus from the dead.

In many ways, Easter should be viewed as a day of new beginnings. A. B. Simpson has said, “Easter is the New Year’s Day of the soul.” It is good and right for us to acknowledge this day for what it is, a day of victory over sin and its consequences: death, hell, and the grave. The Apostle Paul said of this resurrection victory:

“...Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:20-22).

Easter, therefore, marks the beginning of this new chapter of life, so it is important for us to remember this day and celebrate it. The early church, however, modeled that this celebration of resurrection life ought to be a weekly matter in the life of a Christ-follower. The early church gathered weekly on Sunday, the Lord’s Day. You see, the first Christians were Jews who either believed on Jesus during His life and ministry or those who believed at Pentecost. It was these Jewish Christians who left the practice of Shabbat, sabbath worship on Saturdays, to gather and worship on Sundays because Jesus was resurrected on a Sunday.

As we contemplate how glorious and wonderful Christ’s resurrection was and what it means for sinners, it is too great to isolate to a once-a-year celebration. No, the resurrection ought to be celebrated and proclaimed weekly as the church gathers for worship. We dare not allow it to become nothing more than a religious holiday that we give little attention too. Instead, it ought to be as Robert Thornton has said, “the foundation of our whole life.”

The message of the cross and the resurrection is the message of the gospel. And as the Apostle Paul said, the gospel *“is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”* (Rom 1:16). It is the gospel that God’s Spirit uses to open the eyes of sinful man to his spiritual need. It is through the gospel that man sees his need for forgiveness because of the condemnation and separation sin has caused in his life. It is through the gospel that he recognizes new life is found only in the resurrected Christ

(Eph 2:1-10). And it is through the gospel that he understands how sinful man can be brought near to God and given citizenship among His people (Eph 2:11-22; 1 Pet 2:9-10).

On this Easter Sunday, may our eyes be opened to the beauty and grace of the gospel. My prayer for those who are Christ-followers, is that you will see Jesus with fresh eyes today, and that your life will not be marked by mere religion. Now, I am not saying it is bad. Religious activity is good if it moves you toward the Lord, but Jesus desires more for you than just spiritual motions. He wants His life to be pressed out through yours as you learn to abide in Him (John 15). For those who are not in relationship with Jesus, my prayer for you today is that you will recognize your sin and the condemnation and separation it has caused and be drawn to Jesus, receiving His forgiveness and new life.

Whichever group you may be in today, may we all learn to live in the overflow of Christ's life and power as we seek not to be religious but in intimate relationship with the resurrected Jesus. This pursuit is not easy. It requires focus and spiritual sensitivity. In the final passage of Luke 10, we see this struggle displayed by two sisters. Both of them loved Jesus, but one was distracted by her service. The other enjoyed intimacy and kept her heart opened to His Word.

Read Luke 10:38-42.

Inquiry: Worship is at the heart of all that we as believers are and all that we do in the Christian life. It is important that we be busy laborers, working the harvest fields of the Kingdom. It is equally essential that we model compassion toward people who are exploited, hurt, or marginalized. However, before we can represent the Lord Jesus or imitate His mercy, we must first spend time with Him and learn from Him. We must take time to be holy.

Mary of Bethany is mentioned three times in the Gospels, and on each occasion, she is in the same place. Mary is at the feet of Jesus. Here in Luke 10, we find Mary setting and listening to the teaching of Jesus. In John 11:32, she falls at His feet and shares her broken heart with Him. Lazarus, her brother, has died. Then in John 12:3, Mary anoints Jesus' feet with perfume just days before His crucifixion.

Likewise, Martha is also mentioned three times in the Gospels. In two of the three stories, she is portrayed in an act of service. In Luke 10, she is hosting Jesus and His disciples. She was a type-A personality who possessed the gift of hospitality big time! As such, all her energies were focused on the Lord's comfort. The guest room was straightened. She had run down to the market to select the best produce, bread, and meat for the meal. After returning, Martha scrubbed, baked, and prepared the table. Everything had to be perfect. The side dish had to be warm. The best drink must be on the table. And the table setting had to be ready.

While Martha's attention to detail and commitment to service is impeccable, somehow her hospitality made her sour. She is bossy, commanding Jesus to tell Mary to help (vs. 40). She is impatient and thinks that no one is helping enough. She is also bold. Martha lays into Jesus. It is easy to picture her with a rag in one hand and the other hand on her hip as she lectures the Lord about not caring. Now, before we cast stones at Martha let's remember that housework can be daunting. One lady has described it as "constantly putting pearls on a neckless with no knot at the end of the string." There is a futility in the beauty of it all. Martha was in the kitchen serving the Lord because that is what she loved to do. That is where her giftedness shined the best. At the same time, she would have loved to have been able to be out with Mary, setting at the feet of Jesus. Her duties, however, pulled her away.

In all honesty, I bet many Christians in the church today find themselves in Martha's situation. You are serving the Lord, but rather than finding joy in it, you feel sour. You are frustrated and impatient with people. From this story, I want you to see that serving the Lord is good and right. We should and must be engaged in sharing the gospel and ministering to people's needs. However, before verbalizing the gospel message or caring for the

needs of others, Christians must first take time to be with Jesus. We discover two truths in this passage that will help us continue living in the overflow of Jesus' life.

1. A Christian's first and primary calling is to listen to and enjoy Jesus.

⁴¹*But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴²but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."*
– Luke 10:41-42

Jesus' gentle rebuke of Martha is full of love and grace. He commended Mary for her choice, but He also did not discredit Martha's service. In essence, Jesus told her and Christians everywhere in all their service not to forget that only one thing is necessary. The one thing is not the next task on the to-do list. It is not serving others and meeting needs. The one thing necessary is setting at His feet. It is listening to and enjoying the Lord Himself.

Mary and Martha are often contrasted as though each believer must make a choice as to which kind of Christian they will be, a worshiper like Mary or a worker like Martha. Obviously, each Christian has a unique personality and gifting, but it no way does this mean the Christian life is an either/or situation. No, it seems quite clear that the Lord would have each of us imitate Mary in our worship and Martha in our work, doing both simultaneously. I would argue that work for the Lord is part of our worship.

Jesus indicated that Mary had "*chosen the good portion*" (μερίς). His wording is significant. Throughout the Bible, God is described as the "*portion*" or "*inheritance*" of His people.

²⁵*Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.* – Psalm 73:25-26

²²*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; ²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."* – Lamentations 3:22-24

Israel enjoyed the portion of land given to them as their inheritance for being God's people. Ultimately, the inheritance was not land or provision; it was the Lord Himself. He was their portion. The purpose in all that the Lord did for Israel was to lead them to find joy and satisfaction in Him. Today, for us who have received eternal life in Jesus Christ, the purpose of our inheritance and portion is to enjoy the Lord.

As we think about what it means to live in the overflow of Jesus' life in us, let's see that in all our service the primary calling on our lives is to listen to and enjoy Jesus. Martha invited the Lord into her home, but then she neglected Him as she prepared an elaborate meal He did not need. Listen up, Christian and non-Christian, what you do with Jesus is far more important than what you do for Jesus. Again, it is not an either/or choice. This is a matter of Christian balance in our worship and work. Being with Jesus and in His Word fuels and focuses our service.

2. A Christian's secondary calling is to serve Jesus and others.

Please do not miss that Jesus never rebuked Martha for serving. He welcomed her service. The implication of the passage is that He and the disciples later sat down with this family and enjoyed together the meal she had prepared. Martha's ministry was important, for she was serving the Lord. She sought to meet His needs and care for His people. A few months later, when Jesus and the disciples returned to Bethany, Martha again hosted them and prepared a meal (John 12:2). On this occasion, she did not fuss one time. Her disposition was completely different. This time, she had God's peace in her heart because she had learned to sit at the feet of Jesus. Martha had discovered that being with Jesus is her primary calling, and it is the power that drives her service to the Lord and others.

The key to living in the overflow is to have your priorities in the proper order: Jesus first, others second, and yourself last. Christian, it is vitally important that you spend time with Jesus at His feet every single day, allowing His Word to wash over and fill you. There is nothing more important in your daily schedule than this. You see, the chief portion of your life as a Christ-follower is the part that only God sees.

Conclusion: Jesus indicated that Mary had chosen the good portion, and it would not be taken from her. She was committed to spending time with the Lord because she loved Him. Her worship and service came as a result of living in the overflow of Jesus' life being pressed out through hers. Can the same be said of you today? Are you committed to listening to and enjoying Jesus? Are you allowing the overflow of your walk with Jesus to empower your service to Him?

On this Resurrection Day, let's remember that Jesus is our portion, our inheritance. As God the Son, He came to live the life you could not live because of sin, and He came to die the death you deserve to die because of sin. His death on the cross satisfied the wrath of the Father against your sin. And His resurrection proves that the Father accepted Jesus' atonement, while providing new life in Him. Many of you have received this new life. Are you living in the overflow of it? Others have yet to receive it. What would keep you from it today?