

Some of you may know I don't drink coffee. Because of that I don't spend time at Starbucks. Occasionally Jennifer will want to stop if we're going someplace together. We do the drive thru most of the time, but we have gone inside. Observing people in a Starbucks is fascinating. Some know so well what they want they don't even look at the menu. Some want to try something new so they study the menu. Many are looking at their phones. Some even pay from their phones. They give their name. And then they walk right out. I mean already paid for their whipped, double shot, mocha, latte, coffee and cream, but left without it. I read somewhere that one customer per shift completely leaves the store without taking their paid for coffee. Those people are distracted.

I don't have to tell you how distracted and divided we are these days with our attention. The claim of so many and their multi-tasking sometimes is scary. They can drive and eat breakfast. Or drive and do their makeup. Listening to a phone conversation and reading through email at the same time isn't a problem. Give them a book to read and a TV show to watch. Even write this sermon, answer email, post to Facebook, and take care of a few chores around the house all at the same time. Except the water on the plants runs for an hour past when I wanted to stop it. The Facebook post sounds messed up getting confused with the email answer. And the sermon, well you'll have to be the judge of that, unless you're attention is divided with multi-tasking right now.

In the gospel, Martha welcomes Jesus into her home. What an honor to have the Savior God come and spend an afternoon in her home. She was glad to have her Lord and master there. It seems she spent time doing what we might expect to do if someone so important showed up at our house. **"Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made."** Of course there were distractions. Martha was busy. Exactly what the preparations were we don't know. She could have been cleaning up the house or making the meal. She could have been running around notifying her friends of her special guest. She could have been directing the servants or readying the table. Whatever the preparations they divided her attention.

This was quite a privilege for Martha to have Jesus visit. She, **"opened her home to him."** She wanted Jesus to feel for however long he stayed for as many times as he came back like he was not only welcome, but that this was his home. No question Martha wanted Jesus to feel comfortable, as comfortable as possible. Someone this important needed to be served. It was all she could think to do. Do this for him, do that for him. Serve him. It was why she got caught up in all the preparations. There was plenty to do and she just didn't have the time to sit and listen to Jesus. After all, he deserved the best. He deserved whatever she could do to serve him.

Martha's sister was also there that day Jesus came. **"She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said."** Mary also welcomed Jesus. She too was glad to have him there. Was she cleaning and picking up and preparing before Jesus arrived? Was Mary helping as much as she could to make things as nice for Jesus as she could? Was she right there by her sister's side helping and working prior to his arrival? The Bible doesn't answer those questions, but gives no reason to think she wasn't. What we know for sure is how Mary reacted when Jesus arrived. With undivided attention she remained completely focused on Jesus. Nothing to distract her. Nothing to cause her to run around. Other stuff could wait. Preparations could wait. Mary was busy, busy being served by Jesus.

We see ourselves at times in both of these sisters. We've been Martha. Welcoming to Jesus and wanting nothing more than to serve him. To go 110% and show him how welcoming we are. Show him our love for him. We get busy. Get to work. Jesus certainly wouldn't want us to be lazy so we invest tons of time into work. And it's good too, because giving 110% allows us to also pay for things that support our family. Jesus likes that because supporting our family is good. Jesus wants perfection. So it's natural to give 110% in dedication to our practice of sports. That's exactly the kind of effort Jesus wants to see. And the little things in life can't get overlooked. Going grocery shopping, doing laundry, keeping a clean house, making repairs around the house, spending extra time with our spouse, showing attention to the grandchildren, paying bills... Jesus wouldn't want any of these going undone because doing them gives glory to God.

Life is filled with plenty of things that call for our attention. Good things that God wants us doing. Effort we should exert. Relationships we should build. Providing we should do. But these take up a lot of time. We spend almost every moment doing them. No time left for recreation or rest. No time left for ourselves. We get worried and upset. They have to be done. They're good things that show Jesus we love him, show him we want to serve him and our families. So it's challenging because we give 110% for God's glory on things that take up all our time. Then when we need time for ourselves, to relax, to catch up on other things, our attention continues to be divided. Church time, devotional time at home, any time with Jesus is all too easily compromised. Doing was supposed to not worry or get us upset because it's serving Jesus. But we become just like Martha, worried and upset over the very things that sinfully divide our attention.

Craig, Craig, you are worried and upset about many things. Where Jesus speaks to Martha, using her name twice in a gentle yet attention getting way, there substitute your name. **"Martha, Martha, the Lord answered, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better."** At times you've been Mary. Welcoming Jesus and showing him how much you love him by being focused and attentive. You show him how much you love him by slowing down, stopping the race of life, and by just sitting at his feet. You let him speak to you in the only way he promises he will, in his Word.

But this story isn't about Martha and Mary as much as it's about Jesus. He was looking to draw both of the sisters to the one thing needed. It was there for them, right in front of them, in the person of Jesus. It was coming out of him as he spoke and it was so important Jesus said it was the only thing needed. Mary was locked into it and Martha was missing it. God's Word with its promises and love poured out of Jesus. He wasn't in their home to be served by them. He had come to serve them with his grace.

Jesus brings your divided attention to a single point this morning. He calls for you to lose the distractions. He makes the point that it's not about serving him unless you're first served by him. A lifetime of doing right things or telling yourself that's what Jesus would do gets you nowhere without sitting at his feet and just listening. And what does Jesus say? To Mary we don't know. To us, we can read it. Bring your Martha-like cares to him because he cares for you. Lay your sins of distraction at his feet and his awesome love clears them away. Come with the frustration and anger at what's not getting done and see what Jesus already has done. The Word of God declares all your sins are forgiven, all your frustrations and anger are paid for and gone, and only the love of Christ remains as most important for you.

Only one thing is needed, truly needed. It's not a clean church or a mowed lawn. It's not a straightened up home or ironed pants to wear to church. It's not what you or I can do to serve Jesus. Only one thing is needed and Mary had it, Jesus was sharing it. Quiet yourself for the one thing needed. God's Word is the best portion of a meal that you don't want to miss. The best part is this best portion it's already provided for you. No work necessary on your part to get it. This one thing needed is free of charge and available to you. Be in it often. Realize if Jesus declared it most important then it must get top priority. Clear schedules, reprioritize things, make lists, pray for focus. It is God's promises that will help you so you will have the one thing needed, his Word.

I'm amazed at how frequent and easy it could be to walk out of a Starbucks without the coffee you paid for. That's one distracted person. But we each have distractions, some seem worthy, some are good things, but they divide our attention. Serving Christ is second to being served by Christ. Christ serves you. His Word is the one thing needed. His love there provides you motivation. His grace gives you strength. Sit at his feet, listen to him, the Word of God is the one thing you and I need.