



Daily Reflections

July 17, 2016

Scripture

Luke 10:38-42

Jesus entered a village
where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him.
She had a sister named Mary
who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak.
Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said,
“Lord, do you not care
that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving?
Tell her to help me.”
The Lord said to her in reply,
“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things.
There is need of only one thing.
Mary has chosen the better part
and it will not be taken from her.”

Our Scripture Reflection

There is a question that has been bantered around for centuries about this passage: Is Jesus endorsing Mary's stance, one of contemplation, over Martha's stance of action? The question actually misses the full meaning of this scripture. To appreciate the Lord's words, one must return to 9:51 where Luke tells us that "He resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem." Jesus is like a missile with a homing device. Once locked on to His target (Jerusalem) nothing will distract nor deter Him. Why? His energy is totally directed towards winning our salvation.

His stay at the sister's house is brief. They have one chance to hear His message. It's a use it or lose it proposition. The important work of hospitality must wait. Therefore, Mary has, indeed, chosen the "better part" given the urgency of Jesus' mission.

Food for your Journey

Prayer is like having a date with God," says Trappist monk and author Thomas Keating. "Regular periods of prayer let us get acquainted with Christ and God, not unlike the way we might phone someone who has impressed us or attracted us to their goodness. It's the same way in forming a relationship with God. We have to hang out together."

For the monastic, hanging out with God is a way of life. For the rest of us, busy with babies and bosses, spouses and parents, God is content with a brief date - he asks only that it be a standing one. St. Benedict expressed that in his Rule when he wrote: "Give yourself frequently to prayer," but added, "Prayer should therefore be short and pure"

Ron Berges, an oblate of St. Andrews Abbey in California, aims to balance the demands of his law practice with a commitment to his prayer life. "The important thing is to set up a cycle of prayer," he says. "If you give God five minutes a day in this type of practice, God honors that. Your five minutes might be equal to someone who has the leisure time of five hours."

-Lynda McDaniel, "Hanging out with God," Beliefnet.com.

In his fine book, *The Physical Side of Being Spiritual*, Peter Gillquist writes of the two errors into which we fall regarding our work. They are equal and opposite. The first is what he calls "Tube Theology." This is the notion that humans are merely conduits through which God wants to do his work. The goal of this theology is to let go of our own initiative and will so that the Holy Spirit can take us over completely. We no longer live and work for God, but he lives and works through us. This is the passive error about work. The other error is its opposite: "Bootstrap Theology." It says, "God has given you everything you need to do what he wants you to do, so just get out there and do it." This is the active error.

The biblical position is what Gillquist calls "Synergy." The word synergy is derived from two Greek words, *syn*, "the same as," or "together with," and *ergos*, which means "work" or "energy." This is the view of work espoused by the apostle Paul when he described himself and his colleagues as "God's fellow workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9, NIV). God has not called us to be tubes, but sons and daughters. Nor did he mean for us to be self-made men. As one wag put it, self-made men only demonstrate the horror of unskilled labor. God has called us to be co-workers.

--Ben Patterson, *Serving God: The Grand Essentials of Work and Worship* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 158-59.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Help me to hear You when You speak to my heart throughout this day. May I always seek and listen to Your direction, especially during the turbulent times. Amen.