

Pent 9C 2022 “Mary and Martha” Luke 10:38ff. July 17, 2022 Pastor Ken Hilston, Emmanuel, Norwood “Somebody Has to Make the Meal!” 1580 (strange, usually I have to work hard to find a children’s sermon for a passage; today almost all of the sermon could be used!! How many can you find??

Why would Martha, need to complain, to lower Mary’s faith value? Yes, religious people squabble??!!

What are we supposed to do?

What is right? Who is wrong? After all: somebody has to make the meal!

A Greek word, “Kairos” unravels for us not what should, and should not be done, but, “what time is it, for what?”

Kairos: is it a time to listen to Jesus or work in the kitchen, after all, didn’t Jesus take time to feed the multitude?

Jesus slept on a boat in the storm, a faithful, trusting sleep. BUT, Jonah hid in the bottom of his boat, in defiance of God’s command: “Go to Nineveh!” Jonah remarks: “fat chance! I’m taking a LONG nap!” Both slept!

It is definitely hard to tell people just what to do and what not to do, at all times, if at one time, some deed is right, and the same deed, another time, wrong.

If something can be right one time, and the same deed untimely, the next, it is hard to be sure it is correct: the right thing, at the right time! We need to be flexible.

We need to be “faith flexible!”

As a world, we “need” some prosperity from burning fossil fuels, but easily forget what possible problems might plague the future. Juggling carefully the real needs of the present, alongside the very real needs of the future, is never totally clear or easy, but it is terribly important!

Martha was faithful to the cause.

She loved Jesus, but why break out and complain to Jesus about her heavy task, and why He would allow Mary to just sit back and only listen to Him?

If she really felt it was not her time to cook,

why did she do it, with such a strong complaint?

why did she sound so jealous?

why did Jesus rebuke her outburst?

Did Mary get away with something, take advantage of Martha’s hard work?

Luther always said, while looking at the faithful in God’s eyes:

a servant cleaning, was on the same level in the faith as the most faithful clergy or bishop, all, who do their faith task, faithfully in the kingdom.

What is our faith task?

So, why the harsh comparison by Martha, and strong rebuke of Martha, by Jesus?

Either Martha didn't like her task at that moment, or felt Mary ignored her duties.

Martha wanted to draw a favorable comparison to her deeds, compared to Mary. "Look, I do the heavy lifting, while Mary is lazy."

In this way, she lifts up her service as more important, and lowers Mary's "lazy" faith contribution.

Why in the presence of Jesus, would she feel the need to chastise her? What is she worried about?

How often do we do the right things, for the wrong, very sneaky, reasons!? To look down and complain about someone?

I remember in high school a game we played, or at least tried to play. We were excited when someone else got in trouble. We could say to our folks- "Look at me, I'm at least better than them. Cut me some slack!"

But two can play the game, when our folks compared us unfavorably to someone who worked hard, doing the right things, while we ducked hard work.

It is easy to look only at our stature, when we compare ourselves to someone faltering. But why do we need to do that?

One: get the folks to ease up on us, but we also felt we needed to have our stock take a boost, the easy way, on the backs of others.

When we are afraid we are not either loved or appreciated enough, we like to step on someone, down below us, to lift up our lives.

* Who cares what OTHER people do, or not do? Answer: we all do!

If we trust we are loved, we do not need to put someone down.

Then, we can spur ourselves on and compare ourselves to someone who works better than ourselves, and say "how can I better myself?" *We never improve ourselves, when you just look down on someone. (689)

Sometimes pastors might say, "if I could get away with what that pastor did, sure, we would have more in church."

One faith question: who do we compare ourselves to, and why?

Is it a comparison of someone who gets us moving, or one who lets me off the hook to justify our laziness?

Martha tried to look down on Mary when she just listened to Jesus, but did NOT look up to Jesus, or truly see what Mary really did, and should do.

My thought: Martha feels some part of her faith is lacking.

Why would Martha need to lower the faith value of Mary? Maybe, Martha did believe, but was not sure enough, where she stood in our Lord's eyes, for whatever reason.

The question I often pose when doing services at the nursing home is:

"do you really believe, trust, the Lord could love you as you are, not just accept you? Does He only love you, because He has to?"

Maybe Martha looked at her life, and thought, "since the Lord can see all of my life, He couldn't love me, as I am? Yes, He will welcome me, but why?"

BUT: Could He really love, ME?" "Maybe I need to tidy up my life, before I feel like I deserve to be loved?"

Maybe I have to push more, and try harder, or else!? Maybe that is why, I see Mary's competition in the faith."

IF Jesus might notice how hard I slave in the kitchen He could more fully appreciate my labors, and it might make up some of the difference? I just need to strive a little harder, to have Jesus respect me, more?"

"I'm just not sure where I really stand! Why can't our Lord appreciate how hard I am working?"

"Why don't I feel like our Lord loves me, as I am? I can understand the law, but grace is beyond me!"

Maybe this is why Jesus lets her know, "you are too anxious, distracted by many things? Why should Mary bother you?" (1032)

We assume Martha was not told by our Lord to work in the kitchen, but chose her task, instead of remaining with our Lord and Mary.

Maybe she chose to serve Him, instead of letting our Lord FIRST, serve her.

In other words, she wanted to serve the One who is the Host, before she was fed. She wanted to make the choice.

Maybe, she should be upset and blame herself for her choice, her anxiety, not Mary. I wonder if Martha even asked what Jesus wanted to eat? Why did our Lord serve the disciples on of all days, Maundy Thursday?

Whatever the exact case, Martha was not in tune, with what our Lord wanted her to do.

She acted, before she found out what our Lord wanted. In case you wonder: this probably is the first rule in prayer: do what our Lord wants!

Why couldn't Martha assume, Jesus would have told Mary to help, if He thought she was lazy?

For the positive sign, what is Mary doing right, and why? What is the one portion Mary is appreciated for?

There is a certain BALANCE needed to serve in the kingdom, a balance between the physical tasks, and learning how to find out what the important tasks should be.

If Mary only sat at the feet of Jesus, but did not lift a hand, it is just as unnerving and unproductive as Martha's complaint.

Maybe Mary knew her faith tank tilted toward empty and needed to be replenished?

Maybe she had a faith sense, Jesus had something more important to add to her life, BEFORE she could be prepared to do her servant work?

*JUST Maybe, her service started to sound, feel like Martha's complaints and whining?

Our prayer life needs to have a sensitive sense of Kairos: what time is it, for what our Lord, wants me to do?

Much like worship: we go to be fed, THEN, while nourished, be sent out into the world, to share the gospel.

Before we get ready for the church to serve our Lord, we always need to be served first, by our Lord, the host, before we CAN find out what to do, when.

On our own, like Martha, we could very easily get most frustrated when acting, before we hear our task, and maybe we do, what is not even needed.

We first need to be nourished and served, to find out what our church needs to accomplish.

First things first, and then our task is filled with joy, instead of frustrated jealousy and uneasiness, working on the wrong task, the task I chose.

This was all brought painfully to mind in one of my Ohio churches.

One lady super faithfully in charge of the receptions after funerals, in my last visit to her while she was dying, said, "I only have one request. I do NOT want a church reception after my funeral. "I do NOT want the ladies complaining, again, about the need to serve a funeral meal, now, on my account."

Her last words to me were so painfully sad. I never told the ladies why the one who always planned the funeral meals, did not have one.

When we start to sound like Martha, we need to step back and let our Lord refresh us with His Spirit of Peace to sense the "faith Kairos:" what faith time, is it, for what?

But, what do I do, when the "Good News," feels like a chore? 1387/1613 Amen Hymn

(children's sermon) I remember the time the twins at home demanded to pick up their toys, when it was time to do the dreaded homework: "but I have to take care of our toys!" Of course: they were supposed

to take care of the toys an hour earlier. Clock time- only tells time, not what it is time to do what. Time to laugh or cry; time to work or play, time to rest or exercise;)