



“Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World”

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
5:30 pm Saturday, July 16, 2016
8:15 and 11:00 am Sunday, July 17, 2016
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Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Luke 10:38-42

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

“I’m busy doing stuff.” That’s the answer I often receive from my spouse when I ask her what she’s doing, what her day is like, if she wants to do something with me. “I’ve got stuff to do.”

And, admittedly, her job takes all kinds of her attention. She’s the full-time, year-round director of Camp Nawakwa, one of the three properties of the Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania, located just outside of Arendtsville, in Adams County.

She moves to camp, usually Memorial Day weekend, and lives there until camp is over, which is generally the second week of August. She has to hire and train staff, plan the program, and arrange for summer transportation and activities. Then, she has to oversee a staff of about 40 people, ranging from high schoolers who work in the kitchen, on maintenance, and with arts & crafts, to college age and older who are life guards, counselors, and program staff. And, of course, she has to deal with all the related hormones, home sickness, and shenanigans that always happen when groups of young people (well, okay, when ANY age group) live together.

She’ll have about 900 campers – youth, Family Camp, and Elder campers – come through camp during those seven weeks, plus another 100 *Manos Unidas* on-site Day Campers, who are drawn largely from Adams’ county sizeable Hispanic community.

Then, during the school year, several school districts use Nawakwa’s 336 acres for their Outdoor Ed program. The four lodges are rented out almost every weekend during the year. And there are numerous day long and multi-day events that happen, as well.

Marianne is busy doing stuff. Kind of like Martha in our gospel reading today.

Martha has stuff to do. **She** is busy doing stuff. And it’s important stuff, too. Stuff that *needs* to get done. The drawback for Martha is, that she thinks sister Mary isn’t doing anything of importance.

Let’s back up a moment. Jesus has just finished his encounter with the lawyer, and gave the story of the helpful Samaritan. The group moves down the road to the next town, where they encounter a woman named Martha who invites Jesus into her home. It’s never explicitly said in Luke, but we make the assumption that this is Martha, sister not

only of Mary, as stated, but of Lazarus, as well. It's only in John's gospel that we hear about Lazarus.

But in our story today, Martha invites Jesus into their home. Sister Mary sits and listens to Jesus' words, his stories, his parables, whatever it is that he is saying. Which is well and fine. She is being a disciple (some argue that she is in some type of subservient, submissive, role, by sitting at Jesus' feet. But that's where **all** the disciples sat).

At some point, though, Martha, scurrying around, presumably preparing food and getting the eating are ready, probably only half listening to what Jesus is talking about, worrying about how she'll get everything **done**, sees her sister and does that thing that siblings do: tattle.

Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.

Flashback to my own childhood:

Mom! Joan's not letting me watch what I want, but I was here first! Mom!

And like a parent is kind of how Jesus responds to Martha:

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴² there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Ouch. Sometimes, the truth really stings.

I think, though, that there are a couple of things happening here that are often misunderstood. I think we can see Martha's point – I mean, she's got a house full, she's the hostess, she needs help. Why **isn't** her sister getting up off her duff and lending a hand?

But then, I think we can argue, what is up with Martha? Why isn't **she** sitting there *with* Mary, listening, learning as well? What is Martha worrying about? Because that's what Jesus says, that Martha's worried and distracted.

How often are many of us attempting to "multi-task," do too many things at once, and do none of them well? Sure, she may have been getting dinner ready, and paying attention to Jesus as best she could. But we all know when you're doing one thing, and trying to be part of a conversation, we're at best only *partly* there.

Thing is, neither of these are wrong approaches. We're called to serve. We are called to be disciples. (What's our mission statement? *Disciples in the making, making disciples*). Some of us are better at one than the other, but I think we are indeed **all** called to do **both**.

Mary had the heart of the disciple. Martha had the heart of the servant. I think Jesus' words were that each of us **can** do both. So let's do that, together.

Amen.

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