

Crazy Love – Part B

Scripture: Luke 10:38 – 42

Our scripture reading for today is about Martha and Mary excitedly waiting for Jesus to arrive. Boy, does this situation bring back memories of my wife and I waiting for a special guest to arrive. Oh, my wife would clean the house top to bottom and plan a special meal for our guest. This waiting time can be a very stressful and anxious time!

Martha and Mary have a predicament. The two sisters are anticipating a knock on their door any minute. They have heard that Jesus is on the way and they are very excited! They have experienced his miracles. They have seen his magnificence. To Martha and Mary, Jesus is like family to them. Yet, each sister responds in a different way when Jesus arrives.

Martha immediately goes into action. She ensures the house and food are suitable for Jesus. Martha's gift of hospitality is overwhelming! She has prepared special food, gotten fresh water, and the table is being set.

I can envision Martha scurrying around the house. I have to be honest – I am not a Martha person but my wife is! Are you a Martha? Is your hospitality overwhelming? Are you good at planning out for a special guest?

Mary responds very differently to the news that Jesus is on his way to her house. Mary has butterflies in her stomach and she is so excited that all she can do is look out the window for Jesus. Mary stares down the road looking for Jesus!

I can also envision Mary sitting by the window staring down the road. I have to be honest again – I am a Mary person who gets so excited that all I can do is look for the special guest! Are you a Mary? Do you get butterflies in your stomach and all you can do is watch for your guest?

Are you more like Martha or Mary?

The story of Martha and Mary continues when Jesus arrives. Mary sits at Jesus' feet and listens to Jesus sharing. Martha is not at Jesus' feet, she is distracted with all the preparations.

I wonder if Martha is anxious and troubled about more than the meal. Maybe she has some bills that need paid or maybe she has a relationship that is troubling, or maybe she has health issues that are unresolved or could Martha be mad at Mary for not helping out. Martha understands what it is like to be in the presence of Jesus but yet she is still distracted! Martha is distracted and Mary is at Jesus' feet.

We, way too often, are distracted from Jesus. We are like Martha – we are anxious and troubled. Maybe we have some bills that need paid or maybe we have a relationship that is troubling, or maybe we have health issues that are unresolved or maybe the coronavirus has us distracted. We understand what it is like to be in the presence of Jesus but yet we are still distracted!

So picture this – Martha is walking around Jesus; Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet. Martha is fatigued; Mary is nourished. Martha is consumed by the work of her hands; Mary is centered on the needs of her heart!

Can you picture yourself there in that room with Jesus? I can! I am often Martha – distracted! I mean well but my focus is on all things that need to be accomplished, not focused on Jesus. I go about the business of the church, not focusing on Jesus. Rather than focusing on the joy of being with Jesus, I lose myself in the business of this world. I cannot tell you how many worship services I have lead where I have been so focused on the flow of the service (what comes next) that I did not actually worship in the service! Maybe you know what that is like?

Are you often like Martha – distracted! Your focus is on all things that need to be accomplished, not focused on Jesus. You go about the business of this world, not focusing on Jesus. Rather than focusing on the joy of being with Jesus, you lose yourself in this world.

Like Mary, our deepest thirst is for relationship rather than routine. We need the presence of God beyond our need for cultural congeniality. Yet, in a world full of substitutes how do we quench our essential and spiritual thirst?

First, sit at Jesus' feet and have a drink. In Martha and Mary's day, it was unsuitable for a woman to sit at the feet of a Rabbi or male teacher. Mary's radical act of love was crazy! She did it not out of obligation but out of adoration. It was a crazy love! She risked social shame for the sake of quenching her essential and spiritual thirst. Mary longed to be with Jesus above all else!

How will you make room for Jesus in your life? Will you make room for Jesus out of obligation or out of adoration? Will you choose to sit at Jesus' feet in an outpouring of love – CRAZY LOVE? Will you stop, rest, and bask in Jesus' presence in prayer, study, worship, and silence? How will you eliminate distractions and drink freely from the well of living water at least once a day?

Take a moment now and rest at Jesus' feet in prayer – Eliminate all distractions and drink freely of the living water found in Christ. (pause)

A second way we quench our essential thirst is by inviting others to drink with us. Like Martha, many of us grew up learning the value of hospitality. We often had friends or family drop by to visit, especially on Sundays. Think of those days – people would stop by to eat a meal, watch a sporting event, and enjoy some wonderful conversations filled with belly laughs and joy. Before this would happen, we would go shopping, do the cooking, and clean for days in advance of the visit. And moments before the first guest would arrive, we would change into our party cloths and we would have to clean up. We would then put on party music and prepare to enjoy the fun!

Never mind that some of our closets were messy and some stuff was shoved under the bed, we were ready for a visit from special people.

Communities of grace are a place to quench our essential thirst. Whether it happened over a meal in a home or with coffee at a local café or in a church fellowship hall – true hospitality makes people feel seen, heard, and valued.

That is CRAZY LOVE!

So, my friends, take some time and sit at Jesus' feet and have a drink of his living water and invite others to drink with you. It may just turn out to be a time of crazy love!

Let us pray:

Dear God, help us to open ourselves up to you. We confess that we have tried to impress you and others with our preparation to visit with you in prayer. We have been in the kitchen of this world distracted.

Help us to take time to sit at your feet and listen to your teachings. Help us to invite others to join us and let us share the living water Jesus provides.

And, O Lord, forgive those of us who have been too busy to share your love with others. Help us strip away our distractions and let us make room for the new relationships you put in our path.

Be our Lord, our eternal love, and thirst quencher. Let us feel your crazy love for us. AMEN.