

The One Thing

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Preacher: Tobin Miller

[0:00] You guys can be seated. Welcome to Watermark. This morning, as we've been talking the last week, they did as well about serving and about kids ministry and how God is using people to serve the kids and grow the kids and teach them about Jesus and the gospel.

So we're also going to kind of highlight that this morning for you guys. So I just want to invite Esther and Patney Wu up here. They're two of our volunteers, and they have been a real blessing in helping.

So come on up for a little interview this morning. So thank you guys so much for serving and kids. We're really grateful for you and that you stepped out also as parents to see what's going on in the classroom with your kids. So can you guys tell me a little about your family? Okay. I'm Patney Wu, and this is my wife, Esther.

And we have been married for 10 years now, soon to be. And we have two kids over there, Timothy and Nicholas. And Timothy is six, and Nicholas is four.

[1:10] And we've been at Watermark since it started, and we were at Ireland before that. Thank you. And why do you guys serve in Watermark Kids? Since moving to the church, we've kind of wanted to participate.

And we know it was a family church. We wanted to be part of it. And we didn't really know what to do. And so when we were presented the opportunity to serve in Kids Club, we just thought maybe that's God calling us.

And we know that there's a genuine need because it's always tight, the number of volunteers for Kids Club. And also we have two kids. So we really appreciate their Sunday school teachers in general.

We understand that it is hard. You know, it's hard enough looking after two when they have, like, 20 there. So we just wanted to do our share. And once a month, commitment seems okay.

Thank you. So what's one thing that God has been teaching you guys as you serve the kids? For me, it is to step out in faith because I felt really unequipped to do it.

[2:17] And I always just wanted to hide behind his back and be his lovely assistant. But I ended up finding out that there are, like, 20 running around and you kind of have to get your hands dirty. But I just felt that, you know, when you say yes, God will help you with the rest of it.

And we've managed so far. We haven't lost any kids. Yeah, I think just having a servant heart and just stepping out. We all feel ill-equipped for sure.

But God will always provide a way. And then what's one funny thing? Do you have any funny memories from being back there with the kids? Well, I think we teach our younger one, Nicholas. And, you know, I'm usually very goofy around with him. And so, you know, he always wants me to carry him and everything like that. So, you know, when I'm up there as a teacher and he's coming up to me and wanting to go on my shoulders and all of that kind of stuff, you know, I have to pretend that I'm a really serious guy, you know, and sit down, be quiet, you know.

And so, you know, and he listens to me. And then, you know, I'm glad that he enjoys his father and mother being his teacher. And so it's kind of funny.

[3:42] He says, I like my mommy and daddy being my teacher. Thank you, guys. So, as we had mentioned, we really do, you know, we need some more people back there with the kids.

And so many of you serve faithfully. And we're really grateful for you guys. And so we're just trying to sign on more people. And one thing, I'm really grateful for some parents. Lots of parents serve back there as well.

And lots of singles too. So thank all of you. The parents have an opportunity for their kids to see them serving God and to see them back there. I was looking at some statistics that say that our kids

usually work, some of us work 50 to 60 hours in an office or somewhere away from our kids. And they don't see us at work. But this is an opportunity for them to actually see you and see something that you're doing and see the way that you're actively serving God. So it's a really neat thing for you to be in the classroom too.

So we just encourage you guys to sign on. And we would love to have you. So thanks. And what I've been told is as we've been expanding, we've got like over 100 kids now, we need about how many volunteers?

[4 : 40] We're looking for 20 new volunteers. That would be fantastic. During the last term, before the holidays, we averaged 80 kids per week. And that's not counting the youth that go with Eric.

Okay, good. I'm going to pray for you guys and just pray for the kids' ministry. And then the kids will get dismissed and so it will become less chaotic in here. So Father, we just thank you for this day. We thank you for your goodness in our life. We thank you for the blessing that is family, whether we're singles or married or empty nesters. All of this is the family. And so we come before you and we just, we just, we're in awe of how you've brought us together from so many different backgrounds and different places.

And I just thank you for Pat and Esther and just their desire to serve and to be used in gifting that maybe they might not even necessarily originally gravitate towards. But you've blessed them as they bless their kids and the kids around them.

We pray for all the workers back there now, the volunteers. We know this church is all about volunteers. We pray that you would be with them, that the little kiddos going back would see your son Jesus.

[5 : 44] They would fall in love with him and they would do mighty, mighty things for your kingdom. And we thank you for all these resources that you've given us. And we're just so overwhelmed at your goodness to us.

So we pray all these things, your son Jesus Christ, holy name. Amen. Good morning. Today's scripture reading comes from the gospel of Luke chapter 10.

So please follow along in your bulletin. Now, as they were traveling along, he entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister called Mary who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to his word.

But Martha was distracted with all her preparations. And she came up to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.

But the Lord answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. For Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

[6 : 50] This is God's word. Hey, so a crazy day today. And God continues to show us what it means to worship him. What I thought I would do, I don't know if I should do this, but I thought I'd do this.

We talk about being a family here at the church. And in my family, we interact, we talk, and we discuss things. And often we do this at the end of the sermon.

But we read a very powerful, well-known passage today that you guys have, some of you are probably familiar with. Some of you have heard it for the first time, and some of you have no idea what's going on, because you're just stepped into this.

We're at the end of Luke chapter 10, after a year and a half here. So I just wanted to ask, as you look at the passage today, what are the questions that pop to your mind?

And if you're bold enough, you can just yell them out to me. You usually do Q&A; afterwards. Any questions about this passage?

[7 : 56] Kelvin. Do what? Does God encourage laziness? That's a great one. Great, great. Kelvin. What's the one thing?

What's the one thing? Okay. It's kind of like the City Slickers movie one time. The guy goes, there's just one, you know, one thing. And the guy goes, your finger? And he goes, one thing. So, George, does God encourage laziness?

Kelvin, what's the one thing? What else sticks out there? What does it say about women? You ever thought about that? I mean, this is actually a seminal text for women in the church.

This is the text that begins all of this idea of women in the church. What other things stick out? Any other things? Do what now?

Andrew? Who do you identify more with this? Are you Martha or are you Mary, right? So usually when you hear this sermon, everybody's going, okay, are you a Mary? And the Marys are usually praised. Oh, good girl, good girl.

[9 : 00] And Martha, she used to get slammed, right? You're like, you're type A. You're a loser. I don't think that's what the meaning of the passage is. I don't think that's what the meaning of the passage is.

But it's been taught that way until about 100 years ago. What other questions? Any other questions? Excellent, Phyllis.

Are God's values different than God's values? How do we see people? What does it look like?

Okay. Well, there's no other ones you can yell out later on or at the end.

I think that it's because I think I want to make sure we're on the same track as we read this passage because this passage is packed with stuff. And I'm trying not to go too long in the sermons.

Well, Jeremy and Eric were not supposed to lead worship today. Katie got sick this morning at 8 o'clock, so they just found out that they were on. And so it was interesting because that's what I love about Watermark is it's organic or raw or whatever you want to call it, and everyone serves.

[10 : 06] And then I told them afterwards, I said, well, maybe I'm going to get sick. And Yvonne, you have to do the sermon. She goes, yes, I'm ready. So I'm like, well, you know, so, yeah. Don't need me.

There's a lot of other people who can preach God's word, which is great. We're going to just look at this passage, and I'm going to bring out a couple things that stick out to me in this passage. And there's probably a billion other things that we need to talk about.

But we're finishing up Luke chapter 10. Remember, George, to your response, what we just read last week was the tale of the Good Samaritan. And if anything, that passage said, you know, don't be lazy.

I mean, he says, do it, know it, and do it. And so we come to this passage, and it kind of ends this discussion with what's going on with Jesus and his disciples.

And remember we asked that the big questions were, again, how can I inherit eternal life? Who is my neighbor? Who do I need to be a neighbor to?

[11 : 04] And what do I need to do to get to heaven and be with God forever? And on back of that, you see in this passage over and over again just this idea of relationships.

Relationships. It's about relationships. It's about being in a relationship with the creator of the universe. It's about being able to define your relationship. The year was 1995, November, and I was dating this beautiful girl.

I mean, she was hot. And I get this phone call one day, and it says, hey, can I come over? We need to talk. So guys, you single guys, whenever your girl says, hey, I need to come over, I need to talk, it's going to be something really important.

And so this girl, Christina, comes over, and she introduces me to three letters that I've never heard before. And the letters are D-T-R.

Do you know what those letters stand for? D-T-R. Has anybody heard that? I had never heard those before. D-T-R.

[12 : 19] Define the relationship. Define the relationship. Okay, single guys, take notes here. Okay, because when that happens, I mean, I've never heard that before, but the dialogue usually goes something like this, for those who've never been D-T-R'd.

Where are we in this relationship? Is it just for fun? Are we going somewhere? And the guy sits there and goes, yes, no, yes, Jesus, like my kids, right?

You might be saying Jesus inside, right? So are we just in this for fun or are we going somewhere?

And if where, if somewhere, where? Where is it? And what I've seen in this and what I've learned is that in a D-T-R, the person who has the higher need for a higher commitment level, we're going to call them the D-T-R-er.

Okay, so the D-T-R-er usually comes to a person who is clueless. We can call him the dude or we can call him the D-T-R-E.

Okay, and so the D-T-R-er comes to the clueless person who are, maybe they're adverse to commitment or however it is in your place, and they come in to the D-T-R-E and they say, we need to D-T-R.

[13:44] And usually what happens after a guy walks away from that, he just goes, I've just been D-T-R'd. And he's still trying to figure out what the heck's happening there. I love you, honey.

So I just, every time I hear D-T-R, I flash back to that November 1995, and Christina and I walking around the soccer track, and I just had these hazy eyes, and I was wondering, what am I going to do with this relationship?

What does this relationship mean to me? How am I going to hold this relationship? Am I going to keep this relationship? And she walked away feeling satisfied somewhat that she got her point across, and in my mind, all I could think is, I just got D-T-R'd.

And that was interesting. But we're going to look at a passage today that I think is about Jesus D-T-R-ing a person. And what I realize as I come to Scripture is that the Bible is full of D-T-R-ing. And it's usually God D-T-R-ing you and me. And he's asking us, where are we in our relationship with him?

[14:58] Are we following him? Are we committed to him? Will we choose the one thing? Will we choose the one thing? The passage says in verse 38 that they are traveling with Jesus and his disciples.

Now this is the last six months of Jesus' life. And his disciples and him are heading to Jerusalem. It's always up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem's on this mountain.

And everything else below it is lower. And so his disciples and him are traveling. And they come to this city, this small little town. If you're standing in Jerusalem and you're facing north and you look east, you see this garden of trees.

And it's called the Garden of Gethsemane. And right over this garden, there's this little town called Bethany. It's about a two-mile hike. Now we don't know if this is the first time that Jesus came here. It seems to be that this is the first time he ran into these two sisters. And so he's coming to this town as he's heading to Jerusalem. And whenever you think heading to Jerusalem, you always think sacrifice, the cross.

[16:02] He's going to be crucified for you and me. And so he enters into this town. And we read in verse 38. Now he was traveling along. He entered into a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

She had a sister called Mary who was seated at the Lord's feet listening to his word. And what we realize immediately is that Martha and Mary are single women. Now this, again, this makes no sense to us reading it here now in our culture.

But in Jesus' day and for the first thousand years, this would have been an amazing, an amazing passage. Because what it says is that Jesus has come into this village and he's hanging out with these single women.

Now in Jesus' day, women were looked at really badly. And it's interesting because in the Old Testament, women were handled with value and they were protected.

And for the most part, they were respected. I mean, some of the greatest love stories are in the Old Testament of Abraham and Sarah. And she's 80 and she can't have kids. And everybody's saying, get rid of her. And he's saying, I can't because I love her.

[17:10] And you see this high value and commitment for women. But something happens between Malachi and Matthew, these 400 years of darkness and silence. And what you see is that the role of women become greatly decreased.

And women are treated like trash in Jesus' culture and time. Let me read through you some comments. Now these aren't mine. These are comments from rabbis in Jesus' time about women. Do not trust a woman, especially your wife. Be careful to keep all records of all supplies you issue her. Because she will probably lose some of them and sell the rest.

Give, guys, don't be laughing. If you're a single guy, you should be going, that's terrible. Okay? Okay, okay. Give no property or support to her in your lifetime.

Think about it after you die, but never while you're alive. These are true. Women are responsible for sin coming into the world. Be warned. They're going to cause you trouble.

[18:22] Don't waste your time teaching a woman. You might as well teach a dog. Daughters are a disaster. Now these were what the rabbis and the teachers of Jesus' day taught about women.

And they had an incredible view of women being inferior to men in all areas. Now, I don't think we understand this today. Maybe if I were preaching or teaching to a group of Muslim women and they heard these words, they'd be going, yes, I understand.

Yes, I understand. But in our culture where we're so modern and we're so, we're evolved, these passages kind of fly by us. But in Jesus' day, this was huge. It was very radical and cross-cultural. I mean, up until Jesus' time, how many rabbis do you think had women students? Zero. Zero. There was one in the second century.

He tried to make his daughter because he was very gifted. His daughter was very gifted. He tried to make her a student. And the uproar was so great, he had to stop. And so women were treated poorly, poorly, poorly, worth nothing.

[19 : 29] And Jesus comes in and you read in the Gospels for the first time that women are given high position, high worth, high value. They're treated equally as men.

And for the first time in Scripture, you read these things that speak out really clearly that women and men are on the same level. As Jesus goes and he teaches at least 27 times in the Gospel of Luke, he talks about men and women, women and men.

Women see, men see. Women hear, men hear. Women hear, men don't do and obey. The women obey, the men don't obey. And we see over and over again that in this Scripture, Jesus had this incredibly high view of women.

Do you understand that? I mean, up until that point, no one would ever teach a woman. And Jesus comes in and he's counter-cross-cultural.

He destroys all the boundaries. And he does things in Scripture that we run through in our modern age, but in his time, it was astounding. It was against all culture and all tradition.

[20 : 38] We read in the Gospels that the women traveled with the men. That would have never happened. Never. We read in the Gospels that the women stayed in the same place as the men.

Never happened. Never happened. We read in the Gospels that the women were the ones who were supporting the ministry. Do you know that? The guys weren't supporting the ministry. The women were. Now, if Luke wanted to make this Gospel attractive to people in his age, he would have never said that.

Because the minute they read about women being proactive or involved or students, they would have just shut down. I mean, the fact that the women run to the cave and they see Jesus and they come back and they're the ones who testify that the Lord is risen, all scholars in that time would have said that would have been stupid.

Because no one trusts the word of a woman. But yet, in Jesus' ministry, over and over and over, he validates these women.

He breaks cultural rules and norms and he does incredible things. Do you see what's happening here? Does that make sense? So sometimes it bothers me when people say, you know, Jesus should have done this or he could have done this, but he didn't do this because culturally he didn't have the time, but if he came back, he would do it differently.

[21 : 49] He's definitely terrible. Jesus got crucified because he broke all cultural norms. So we see here that he comes to this house that's run by Mary.

She's the owner of the house. She's the mistress. Her name actually means mistress. And she's there and it says, Mary who is seated at the Lord's, Martha is the mistress, and in verse 39, Mary who is seated at the Lord's feet.

Now this has several meanings, but the biggest one basically says that she's a disciple of Christ.

That she's chosen to follow God, and Christ has said, yes, you're my disciple. Now we only read about Mary three times in scripture, and every time we read about Mary, she's at Jesus' feet.

She's at Jesus' feet listening to his word. She's at Jesus' feet when her brother Lazarus dies. She's at Jesus' feet wiping his feet with her hair, preparing him for burial.

Every time we read about Martha, she's serving. She's serving. She's doing. She's a doer. She's a doer. She's a bee. She's always doing things. She's using her gifts and her talents. But Mary does something incredibly cross-cultural here, and she sits at Jesus' feet, and it doesn't really talk about her physical location, but it talks about what she does.

[23 : 08] Verse 40. Martha was distracted with all her preparations since she came up to him.

Now, and the word here, it's a very interesting word. The word distracted basically means to lose focus.

So Martha invites Jesus in. There's this huge party in her house, and she becomes distracted. The Greek word actually means to be pulled away, to lost in the fog.

And so she's busy doing, and she gets lost. Now, to be distracted means that you have to be distracted from something to something.

Right? Follow my logic here. And so here she's distracted from Jesus in his teaching to cooking, to doing.

And so she says there, I'm trying to serve. I'm distracted. Why isn't anybody helping me? Why won't anybody listen? She can't listen.

[24 : 16] She goes up to Jesus, and she says, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Tell her to help me. Now, in the culture, what would have been happening is some very interesting things.

On one level, Martha would be bothered because there's a huge party, and it was a very awkward setting too. Jesus is teaching, and he's there, and he's talking to his disciples, and the scripture says that Martha just comes up in front of everybody and says, don't you care that I'm doing all this work?

Why are you letting my sister Mary stay here? Why don't you tell her to come help me? I need help in front of everybody. Can you imagine a party like that?

And so Martha comes up, and she's frustrated, but what we don't understand culturally is there's some other things going on there. Not only is she frustrated because she's the only one doing it, but in Jesus' day, what she would have been saying would be something like this.

I'm so upset. My sister is sitting there with the men. Doesn't my sister know that only men are disciples and the teachers? How can my sister be doing that?

[25 : 25] I mean, if other people in the village and the rabbis see my sister sitting at the foot of a teacher, disgrace. I mean, if Jesus leaves and we're left all by ourselves, what's going to happen?

Are they going to come in and drag us out and stone us because she was acting improperly?

Because she's a single woman, she shouldn't be hanging around guys. What is my sister doing hanging out with a man everyone knows that women shouldn't be taught, only men do?

Disgrace. How am I going to stand up to my family when they look at us from now on and they go, Mary, just can't keep in a role, can she? What's going to happen?

Is anybody going to, is anybody going to marry us? Because she's acting improperly and this just can't happen. It's so disgraceful.

Look at the verse again in 40. Who does she blame for the actions of her sister? Who's she blaming?

[26 : 31] God. Do you see that? She's saying, God, how come you're allowing my sister to do this? In Alabama languages, say, hey dude, get your act together.

Tell my sister to come help me. And so she's blaming God in the middle of this stuff because she's all by herself and she can't do it. Verse 41. But the Lord answered and he said to her, now whenever Jesus uses people's names twice, you need to really pay attention.

Because when he uses people's names twice, it's something that we need to hear and learn from.

And he says this, Martha, Martha, you are so worried and bothered about so many things.

In Greek there is the words anxious, overwhelmed, overcome by so many things. Now what we didn't talk about in verse 40 is this.

What was Martha busy doing? What's it saying? Preparations. She was preparing for this big meal. You know in Greek what that word preparation means?

[27 : 42] It means ministry and serving. It's the same word we get deacons and deaconesses from, diakoni. And so what he's saying here is that you're so busy serving, you're so busy using your spiritual gifts.

you're so busy doing all these things that we need to be doing. You've missed me.

You've missed me. Jesus says to her, Martha, Martha, you are so worried about all the ministry things that you're doing and all the ways that you're serving.

and you're so consumed by all these many, many things. In Greek, you can just circle things and write beside it stuff. Stuff.

Verse 42, he tells her, but only one thing is necessary for Mary has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her.

[28 : 48] In necessary, that word actually means essential, that there's only one thing that we've called to do. And he says that Mary has called and chosen the good part. Again, that's a very interesting word.

There's a play in words going on here. She's serving a banquet. She's getting all these meals ready. She wants to feed Jesus this incredible banquet. She wants to just woe it out, be excellent in everything that she's doing. And Jesus looks at her and says, Mary has chosen the better dish. In Greek, that's what it says. You're cooking all these dishes. you're preparing this large meal but Mary has chosen the better one. Me. Martha, I didn't come here to have you make this huge meal for me.

Martha, I just came here to be with you. Martha, I really appreciate that you're using your gifts and you're serving and you're doing all these incredible things. But you're distracted.

You're distracted. You're walking around in a haze and you've missed me. Anybody ever felt that way before?

[30 : 04] That you're doing and you're doing and you're doing and you miss Christ? You've become so busy doing great things and ministry things and Jesus is sitting right beside you and he's saying, hey, I want to meet with you.

I want to talk to you. I want to listen to you. I want you to read my word. I want to be with you. And you look at him and you say, no, I just don't have time to do that right now because I'm too busy. I'm doing important things and good things and things that I know you want me to do.

There's a couple things that stick out here and then we're going to end. Things that kind of have been haunting me these last couple weeks as I keep going back and back to this passage. The first thing that sticks out in this whole, these six verses is this.

I mean, the scripture is amazing. It's kind of like an onion. I think the Bible is like an onion. You cut it off at one level and you see these lines and you go, oh, that's really cool.

But the deeper you get, usually what happens is the more you cry because you see your life in the deep part of the onion. But you see these deeper messages that Jesus wants to teach us.

[31 : 15] And for me, this week, as I looked at this passage, what I keep hearing and coming back to is that the essence of discipleship, the essence of being a disciple, when you look at Martha and Mary's lives, it's not in service.

It's not in finding meaning in the things that I do. It's not in finding meaning in the things that I give. It's not in finding meaning and even in using my spiritual gifts. But what Jesus says here is that the essence of discipleship, the essence of being with Him is just finding Christ.

and being with Him. I mean, look at this passage. Can you imagine it's nothing more worse than serving God and feeling like you're doing exactly what God wants you to do, but in that process you miss God.

Have you ever had that happen to you? There's so many things you have to do and prepare at work or whatever you're doing. You're serving God at your work or wherever God has you.

And you have all these things you're doing and you're preparing and you're trying to do all these things excellently. And then you start going, man, when was the last time I prayed? When was the last time I read my Bible?

[32 : 41] When was the last time I spent time with other believers? And what this passage has been telling me is that there's a big difference between being close to God and being intimate to Him.

And often in our lives we struggle with serving and doing things that we feel like God wants us to do. But we miss God.

I mean, I don't think this passage is about Martha is better or Mary is better. I don't think it's about that at all. But what He's trying to tell us is that whatever you do, whatever your mission is, wherever I have you serving at the bank and the law firm as a teacher in ministry, whatever I have you doing, make sure that I'm there.

I'm there. I'm right beside you. I'm talking to you. Are you going to listen to me?

Martha was distracted. She thought she was doing the most important thing. She thought she was serving the Lord, using her gifts, doing an incredible meal. And she did all these things excellently.

[33 : 55] And I always struggle with it because you never read in the passage where someone said, we want you to do this for Jesus. We want you to develop a great meal, make your house perfect. We want to have everything just exactly the way it should be.

And then when Jesus comes, He's going to eat that meal. You never read that in the passage. And in fact, by Jesus' response, you see that that's not even what He wants at all. Jesus wants her.

He wants her to be with Him and to spend time with Him. And sometimes I think that we forget that because we're so busy doing things and feeling like we're serving. And it happens a lot in ministry. We try to do things correctly and perfectly and we miss Jesus. The next thing that comes out in this passage and I have been learning is that it's very easy to get distracted in this world.

I mean, it's really easy to get distracted, isn't it? I was reading this book and it was basically the tyranny of the urgent Charles Hummel. Charles Hummel says this in his book and it's very interesting.

[35 : 02] He says, we get distracted not just by performing wrong tasks but mostly by trying to cram too many of the right things into a small period of time.

When we do this, we become critical in our spirits. We begin to condemn others and we blame others. Look at Martha in verse 40. You look at this passage, she yells out, don't you care? And I think it's this huge warning for us. You see that she's self-pity. You see that she's angry with other people. You see that she's finding fault with everything that's going on.

You see that she eventually ends up blaming God. And the passage says that she's distracted. She's so distracted that she just can't listen to God and she doesn't know what he's saying. Have you ever had that happen in your life? That you have so many things to do in this small period of time, you gotta cram them all in. They're all really good things.

[36 : 07] And then as you do them, you just get more angry and frustrated and angry and frustrated because you don't feel like you have time. And you start blaming other people and you start complaining and you start blaming God for bringing all these things into your life.

God, why did you have to plant a church right beside us? Because now I need to come and do all these things. I'm not gonna be rested until I get them done. Lord, how come I signed up for this ministry because it's involved so many things.

I just don't have time to do all the things I need to do and do it well. For me, as I read through this passage, there's a couple things I ask myself often. One question is this.

Am I getting more discouraged these days than I was before? Am I worried about what other people are doing instead of what I'm doing?

Do I get more angry more easily? Am I more easily angered as I walk through my day? Do I blame God for things in my life?

[37 : 21] And the passage says that if you answer yes to any of those, you're distracted and you've lost focus. I'm learning more and more that there's a big difference between being close to God and having a relationship with God.

After 25 years of ministry, 25 years of seeing people do and me do, sometimes doing isn't a great excuse for not being close to God.

sometimes being close to God is easier than being intimate with God.

I mean, it's much easier for me to go to five Bible studies this week instead of sit down and be quiet, open God's word and ask Him how I'm doing.

because if I'm quiet and I ask Him how I'm doing, I might hear that voice that says, dude, you're not doing very good at all.

[38 : 34] But if I don't spend that time, I just go to BSF and I do all these other great things.

Whatever it is, as a young Christian, I was just so stressed out because I figured that as I walked with God, I could do 10 great things every week in my church.

10 great things. I mean, they were all amazing. Great teachers. They were going to help me. But what I realized is I tried to cram all those things in that I never ended up meeting Christ.

I lost my focus. I forgot why I was doing things. It's really easy to get distracted in this world and as you look at Martha, you see a little bit of us in her if we're honest.

One of the things I've been learning is as I go through my day, I kind of just do things like this. I go and I pray and I say, God, would you be here right now? God, I'm about to go into this business meeting and it's going to be very difficult.

Will you be with me? Will you speak to me as I go and talk to these partners? As I'm filling out this spreadsheet, it's so easy for me to lose focus on why you have me here and what you have me doing.

[40 : 01] Will you be with me? I need you. The passage says that Jesus came to be with her but Martha was so distracted by great things that she missed Christ.

Now we know that it's not true later in her life. Later in her life, she comes and she does amazing things and she says when she comes to Jesus and Lazarus is dead, she goes, Lord, if you had been here, he would be alive because you are the Lord.

You're the God. You're the creator of everything. And Jesus goes, do you believe he's going to live? Yeah, I know he's going to live. You're going to make him live in a resurrection. Jesus goes, no, no, no.

Do you believe he's going to live now? So you know that Martha got it right later on in her life but now she struggles with being distracted and she doesn't know finally the last thing that keeps coming back into me as I keep reading this is verse 39.

She had a sister called Mary who was seated at the Lord's seat listening to his word. Now Jesus' day, disciples followed their rabbis everywhere.

[41 : 18] There's amazing stories you can read about disciples following their rabbis into the bathroom because they're afraid the rabbi's going to say something they need to hear and they're going to need to write it down because all the word is valuable. There's amazing stories about rabbis going to bed at night and they're feeling a bump underneath their bed and there's disciples there and their disciples are writing out everything that the rabbi is saying because they just want to be so close to the rabbi and they want to know his words, they want to learn from him because it's law and it's life and it's everything.

There's a story of how these disciples follow the rabbi so closely as he's walking down the dusty roads because their goal is to get the dust of the rabbi covering them and they feel like if they get the dust of the rabbi covering them that they're so close that they're not going to miss anything but they're intimate and they know him and I think about this passage when it says Mary sat at his feet because she knew who he was and I wonder for us as a church what that would look like today.

As you left some of you to hang out some of you to eat food some of you to grab your kids and go off if the last thing I said to you is hey make sure you sit by the feet of your rabbi today what would that mean to you?

I said hey make sure as you go out that you get covered by the dust of your rabbi because he has a lot of things to share with you today he really wants to talk to you. What would that look like for you? It might mean it's the beginning of your day you open your bible and you read it for ten minutes. Start in the gospels don't start at revelation.

[43 : 10] It might mean that you start praying little sentence prayers as you go in and do things. It might mean you say Lord Jesus I really need you right now. Will you be here with me?

Whatever it looks like for you you need to do it. The church in Ephesus chapter four is the first church that Jesus talked about and in it he talks about the Ephesian church and he says this is thirty years after he wrote the book of Ephesians he said you guys are studs you you you you you know the word you're making sure your teachers are correct you're rebuking false prophets you're you're preaching the word but I have this one thing against you you've lost your first love in the midst of doing all the right things and being engaged wherever God has you this week the most important thing that God wants from every one of us in here is for us to spend time with him to listen to his word to pray to ask him to come into whatever you're doing that's the one thing what is the greater dish time with Christ what is the one thing the rabbi who sits beside you as you walk through the day wanting to talk to you and the question is will you do it so let me ask you a question how's your DTR if Christ came to you and called you up and said hey I want to talk to you I need to talk right now and he comes in and he says you know I have a problem DTR he's a DTRer we're the DTRE we're going to get DTR'd but he asked us where's this relationship going do you just come and see me on Sunday then you walk away do you just call me up when you need me because you're about to lose your job and then after you get your job and everything is great you just forget about me do you just cry out to me when your life is out of control and your kids are crazy or do you cry out to me all the time knowing that I'm there and I want to be with you

Martha and Mary are in every one of us in here sometimes we're Martha and sometimes we're Mary in the midst of all of this the most important thing God wants to teach you is that wherever you are he is there with you that he desires a relationship with you and he wants you to listen to his voice and spend time with him father we just thank you for this day we thank you for your word which is living and active we thank you for these two amazing women we know that you use them in mighty mighty ways throughout your word in scripture they are there with you to the end because of the lessons you teach them now father let's pray for us as a church and I pray for us as brothers and

sisters here that we'd understand what you want to teach to us today that we'd fall more in love with you and realize that we are right next to you that you're right next to us as we go through our day and the most important thing that you want for us the one thing is that you want us to be in relationship with you father help us not as a church to be doing doing doing and all these great things that we think are of your kingdom and we end up missing what you want us to do but help us as a church and as your people to listen to you to follow you to serve with your hands and with your words to reach out into the darkest part of Hong Kong where 95% of the people if they were to die right now they would be separated from you for eternity father we want to be a church that that bothers us father we want to be a church that that bothers us father we love you and we pray all these things in your son Jesus name amen