

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

September 4, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

Does Jesus Have Your Undivided Attention

Topics – Luke 10:38 - 42; Mary and Martha; Bethany

Text – Luke 10:38 - 42

Congregational Reading – Luke 10:38 - 42

[Note – I have preached this text on SM 090416 - *Looking Unto Jesus and His Emphasis on Having Your Undivided Attention* and SM122715 – *One Thing Is Needful*. There is also a message with the same title recorded in the Bearing Precious Seed Bible; and, there are notes from a message preached by Brother Hamblen on 040608 called *At Jesus Feet* in the Oxford Bible.

Introduction

This text has been preached several times by me and others in the 18 years that I have been here as your pastor. The truth that is emphasized here by the Lord Jesus is indeed very “needful” for us today as it was for Mary and Martha nearly two thousand years ago. When Jesus is speaking, He wants our undivided attention.

I believe that this “Back to School” time of the year is a great time to consider making some changes in the way we pay attention to the Lord Jesus.

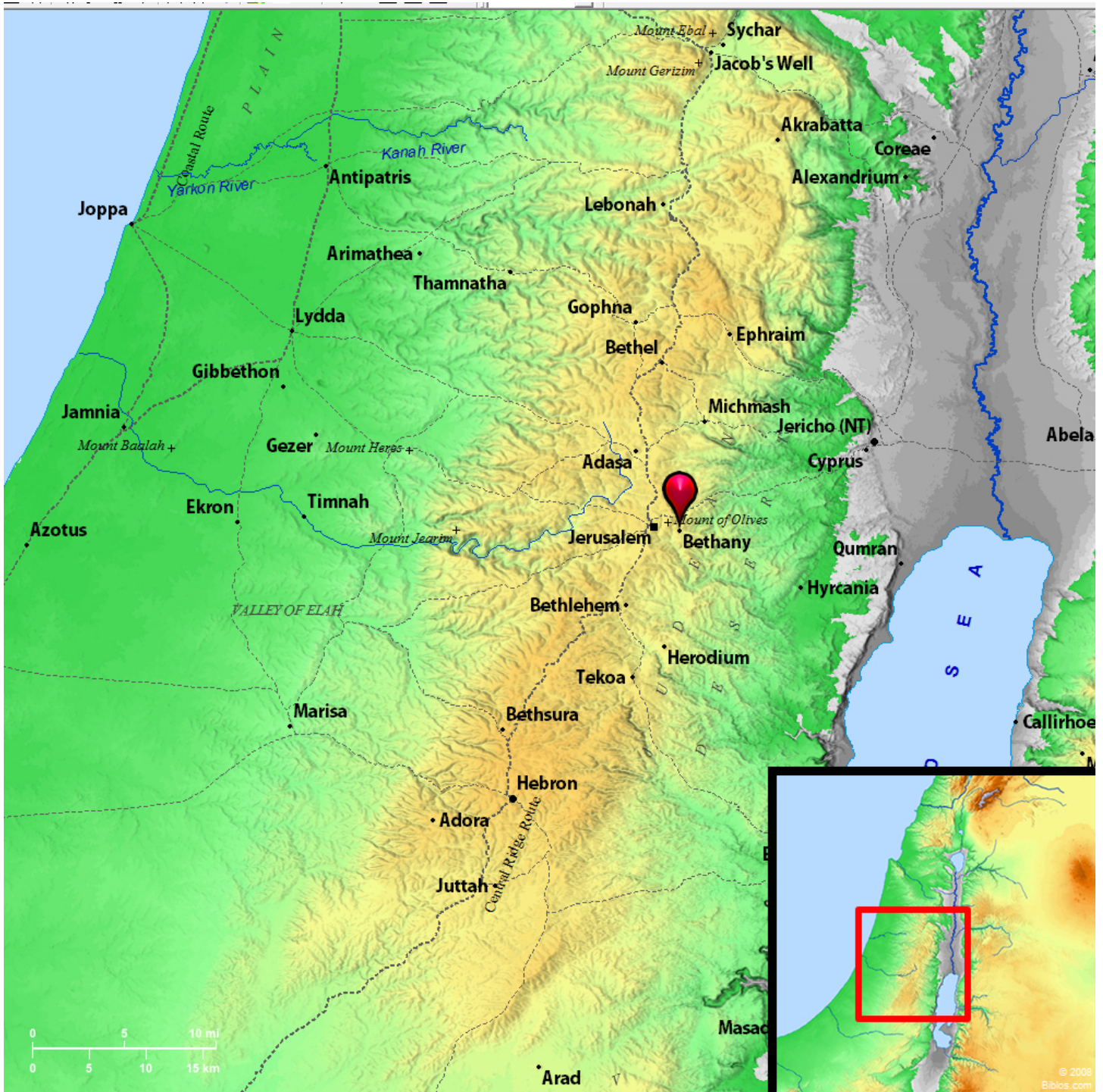
[Re-read the text slowly, explaining the story.]

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house." (Luke 10:38)

The story takes place in Bethany (see map). Bethany was located on the Mount of Olives, which was between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. It was only a couple of miles away from Jerusalem (15 furlongs according to John 11:18 – a furlong is 600 feet – thus approximately 1.7 miles). Jesus often stayed in Bethany at the home of Martha and her sister Mary and brother Lazarus when He travelled to Jerusalem. Bethany was the place where Lazarus would be raised from the dead. It was also the place where Mary anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus at the home of Simon the Leper. Bethany, and particularly the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, was a place where Jesus felt right at home. He loved this family. They were dear friends to Him, and He would often come and stay with them whenever He was travelling anywhere near them.

Preaching Point – Would Jesus feel at home in your house?

Location of Bethany



"And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." (Luke 10:39)

Notice that Mary sat at Jesus' feet. She wanted to be with Him and she wanted to hear what he was going to say. She wanted to fellowship with Him, commune with Him.

Bob Hamblen said, "Love always wants to be near the object of its affection".

It was obvious that Mary wanted to give her undivided attention to the Lord. There were other people there who I am sure that Mary would normally converse with, but now Jesus was in her home, and she was focused exclusively on Him.

"But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." (Luke 10:40)

Mary's sister Martha, however, had a dinner party to run and she needed help with the cooking and serving, and she was a little indignant that Mary wasn't helping her. She finally attempted to enlist the Lord's help. "Tell Mary to get off of her rump and help me."

Jesus response is very interesting – He tells Martha that she should be a little more like Mary in this instance.

"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:"
(Luke 10:41)

"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:42)

Martha, when I am speaking, the most important thing that you can be doing is listening to me.

The message is the same for us today. However, before we attempt to make practical application of what Jesus was teaching Martha, let's first understand:

What is the Lord not teaching?

- 1 He is not teaching that laziness is good. The Bible is full of verses that teach that we are supposed to be busy:**

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man. (Proverbs 6:6 – 11)

He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. (Proverbs 10:4)

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.
(Proverbs 10:5)

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. (Proverbs 13:4)

The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain. (Proverbs 15:19)

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

- 2 He is not teaching that we should not serve Him.**

Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (Psalm 2:11)

Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. (Psalm 100:2)

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3:24)

- 3 He is not teaching that we should not serve each other.**

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)

4 He is not teaching that we should spend all of our time reading the Bible.

What Is He Teaching?

When it is time to sit at His feet, don't let anything distract you from listening to Him. **Jesus wants your undivided attention.**

I Give Him Your Undivided Attention in Your Daily Devotion

Carve out a time in every day when you can sit at Jesus feet in communion with Him. (Daily Devotions, Quiet Time, Prayer Closet, etc.)

You will have to schedule a specific time.

You will have to select a secluded place.

You will have to safeguard this special appointment – otherwise the devil will see to it that something will always come up to keep you from it; or, he will fill your time with distractions that will draw your attention away from the Lord.

This is probably the most valuable and profitable time spent in the entire day; yet, it is also the easiest to neglect.

You need to have a Bible reading plan. I recommend reading the Bible through once per year. I also recommend reading the Proverbs through once per month. (Explain the blog)

You need to have a prayer list.

You may want to do this with your spouse, your children, or with an accountability partner who will help you stay on tract.

When you are listening to Jesus – stay focused.

II Give Him Your Undivided Attention in the Church Services

Determine that you are going to be present for all of the church services, or at least as many as you possibly can. Each service is different. Each service is uniquely designed to meet particular needs in our Christian walk.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:23-25)

When the song service starts, pull yourself away from all of the distractions in the auditorium, and sing to the Lord – just as if it were just you and Him.

We live in an Attention Deficit Disorder society. We struggle to give our undivided attention to anything, but we need to strive to focus – to pay attention to what Jesus is trying to teach us.

Pay attention during the preaching. Move to a place in the auditorium where the distractions are the least.

Don't be a distraction to others by talking or moving around.

There is a life changing truth that Jesus wants you to hear, but you will miss it if you are not here, or if you are distracted when you are here.

III Give Him Your Undivided Attention in Your Service for Him.

This does not contradict what He taught Martha.

Jesus wants us to serve Him in some capacity. My particular area of service involves the ministry of the Word of God and prayer for God's people. I have to stay focused on what God has called me to do. Sometimes I get distracted from the most "needful" things and become pre-occupied with the less "needful" things.

When I am praying for you I need to be focused.

When I studying and preparing for the messages I preach, or the lessons I teach, I need to be focused. And, I need to make sure that I am scheduling enough time dedicated to the "needful things" that God has called me to do.

Paul said, "this one thing I do".

The Bible says,

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;" (Colossians 3:23)

What do you do for the Lord?

Do you teach a Sunday School class? Are you focused in your preparation and study time? Are you focused in praying for your students? Are you focused in ministering to your students, both inside and outside of the classroom? Teach that class – "unto the Lord".

"...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Do you work a bus or van route?

Focus on it – give it your undivided attention.

When you go soul winning, make presenting the gospel to someone your first priority. Focus on it.

Even if you do something mechanical or janitorial – do it for the Lord. Focus on Him as you do it.

Conclusion

Jesus told Mary – "one thing is needful." Jesus is the one thing that is needful in our lives.

As we daily spend time in our devotions – give Him your undivided attention.

As we come together in the church to sing and pray and hear the Word preached and taught – give Him your undivided attention.

As you serve Jesus in ministry – serve Him with all of your heart – focusing on Him – giving that area of service to Him your undivided attention.

If you are truly a child of God, you will either voluntarily give Him your undivided attention, or He will cause some situations in life that will get your undivided attention.

In John 11, we have another story with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. In this passage, Lazarus is sick. Martha

desperately wants Jesus to come, but He waits until after Lazarus dies. When Jesus finally arrives, He has Martha's full undivided attention. She is focused on Jesus, and is desperately pleading with Him for His help. Martha is listening now.

Jesus got Martha's undivided attention.

Does Jesus have your undivided attention?

Illustration - Your Friend, God

As you got up this morning, I watched you, and hoped you would talk to me, even if it was just a few words, asking my opinion or thanking me for something good that happened in your life yesterday. But I noticed you were too busy, trying to find the right outfit to wear.

When you ran around the house getting ready, I knew there would be a few minutes for you to stop and say hello, but you were too busy. At one point you had to wait fifteen minutes with nothing to do except sit in a chair. Then I saw you spring to your feet. I thought you wanted to talk to me but you ran to the phone and called a friend to get the latest gossip instead. I watched patiently all day long. With all our activities I guess you were too busy to say anything to me.

I noticed that before lunch you looked around, maybe you felt embarrassed to talk to me, that is why you didn't bow your head. You glanced three or four tables over and you noticed some of your friends talking to me briefly before they ate, but you didn't. That's okay. There is still more time left, and I hope that you will talk to me yet.

You went home and it seems as if you had lots of things to do. After a few of them were done, you turned on the TV. I don't know if you like TV or not, just about anything goes there and you spend a lot of time each day in front of it not thinking about anything, just enjoying the show. I waited patiently again as you watched the TV and ate your meal, but again you didn't talk to me.

Bedtime I guess you felt too tired. After you said goodnight to your family you plopped into bed and fell asleep in no time. That's okay because you may not realize that I am always there for you... I've got patience, more than you will ever know.... I even want to teach you how to be patient with others as well.

I love you so much that I wait every day for a nod, prayer or thought, or a thankful part of your heart. It is hard to have a one-sided conversation.

Well, you are getting up once again. Once again I will wait, with nothing but love for you. Hoping that today you will give me some time. Have a nice day!

Your friend,

GOD