

Service Transcription 5/10/20

Barrett:

Announcements

Welcome. It's another great day to be worshipping together at Mt. Carmel. I have a couple of quick updates and a couple of quick reminders, before we begin worship. First of all, our donation drive-thru, we've changed the time for that. It's still on Saturday, but instead of 9-11 and then 1-3, we're just going to have one time: from 9 am to 1 pm. If you look at your screen right now, you'll see the items that we're collecting. We are considered a collection site for IFC and CORA. So we're collecting from the whole community, not just the church. And then IFC and CORA will distribute those items to the community.

Our other missions are going great. The things that you have supported financially and through your supplies and offerings: The Table, Transitions Life Care, Baptist Children's Home, Murdoch, our Good Neighbor Program. All of those things, all of those missions that we've been participating in to help our community are possible because of you and your generosity. So thank you. For all of the different ways that you continue to give. It is so appreciated.

Groups are still meeting, if you're looking to plug into a group at Mt. Carmel. There are a lot of them going on, still meeting. Every Sunday morning, our children our meeting at 11 am and 11:30 am. Our youth meets on Sunday night, via Zoom, at 5 pm. Our prayer group meet, via Zoom, at 7 pm on Sunday nights. Our Grief Oasis meets 6 pm on Tuesdays, via Zoom. There's a Women's Bible Study, on Zoom, on Thursday and Friday mornings at 9:30 am. If you're interested just contact Brenda Middour, she'll get you connected there. Our Youth teams and our Children's teams continue to meet. Our deacons continue to meet. Our staff continue to meet. So much still going on, so many ways that you can continue to move with God, right where you are.

If you want more information about any of those group meetings or any of the missions that I've already mentioned, just visit our website: MCBC1803.org. When you come to the home screen, the pop-up menu will guide you to our new webpage which is called "Moving With God in Times of Crisis". On that page, you can sign-up for a weekly email which will give you all of that stuff that I just told you about. It'll just reiterate all of those things and in more detail. It will also provide a weekly prayer prompt. Every Wednesday we are coming together as a church, wherever we are, we are pausing and we are praying together. It is so important that we continue to be in prayer together.

So let's stop and do that now.

Virginia:

Prayer

Please pray with me. **Pause** Quiet our minds. Still our souls. Fill us with your Spirit, Lord. Thank you, for removing so many of the distractions in our lives right now. Teach us what is important. Help us to follow your way and Truth. Accept, now, our offerings of thanksgiving. For the beauty of creation, we give you thanks. For creating us in your image, we give you thanks. For giving us breath, we give you thanks. For not giving up on us when we don't love you with our whole selves, we give you thanks. For

your promise to never leave us or forsake us, we give you thanks. For send us Jesus who taught us to pray saying "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

Barrett:

Intro and Scripture

A couple of months ago, we began a Lenten series that focused on removing the unhealthy stuff that's in our hearts and our spirits.

So that we could follow-up that series with another one, the current one, that we're calling Moving In.

Which is about holding that space. Preserving that space. So that God could fill it in.

All of that emptiness, that vacant space will become a space for God.

Turns out, we removed way more than we expected.

Which is a good thing! 'Cause that means we have way more room for God to move into.

Which means way more miraculous power can happen in us.

"In us" is the key phrase.

I think its pretty safe to say that Jesus places way more emphasis on what's going on in us than he does on what's going on around us.

When you look at the teachings of Jesus, you can see that theme over and over.

When Jesus talks about what people should value, he says "don't put your treasures out there where moths can eat it up and where rust destroys it. Your treasure should be in here where your heart is."

When Jesus teaches about where evil comes from, he says "are you so dull that you think that the stuff you put in your body can defile you? No! Evil comes from out of our hearts".

When Jesus teaches about how to clean up our lives, he says "Woe to you pharisees, teachers in the law you guys wanna clean the outside of the cup, you need to clean the inside of the cup first."

When Jesus teaches about fear, he says "don't fear the stuff that can kill your body out there. Fear what can kill your soul in here."

Even the miracles of Jesus demonstrated this power that God has in us.

His first miracle was this miracle that happened inside the vessel.

The outside of the vessel was unchanged, but the content- what was on the inside- is what was transformed.

Or how about when he calmed a storm? He calms the storm. The Scripture says "no problem, Storm.

Calm down, sit down, be quiet, Storm." And then he turns around to deal with the real problem. What's going *inside* the disciples.

Or how about when they lowered the paralytic through the roof?

And Jesus directed his power at the man's heart.

He says "son, your *sin* is forgiven. You have life now"

And when the people complained for the sake of their faith, he made yet another miracle happen.

This week, we're going to read yet another story about how Jesus reveals in a hidden miracle the importance of God inside of us.

Our Scripture comes for Luke. We're going to be read chapter 10 vs. 38-42.

"Jesus and his disciples were on their way. And they came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to them. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked 'Lord don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me.' 'Martha, Martha' the Lord answered. 'you are worried and upset by many things. But few things are needed, in fact only one. Mary has chosen what is better and it will never be taken away from her.'"

Song: Old Church Choir

Sermon

Lots of books, lots of Sunday School classes, lots of curriculum for small groups and Sunday studies have been written about this passage.

Many of them are slanted at building Martha back up. Making a case that Martha gets a bad rap in this story.

I've read a lot of these. I mean, I've actually participated in some of those.

Many of the arguments sound something like this:

"Martha is treated unfair. This visit from Jesus was a total surprise. She wasn't ready for that I mean how can we blame her for the situation she's in?" OR "say what you want about Martha. But if it wasn't for Martha, the *hard* work doesn't get done. I mean there's gonna be consequences, real world consequences here. The house is gonna be dirty, there's gonna be no food, no drink etc. So, Martha is doing a good thing." OR "At the very least, Martha is a hard worker. I mean, she has what she has. And she uses that, right? "A" for effort. That's what matters in the end."

Our world wants Martha to be right. So bad. We don't want Martha to be wrong in this story.

We wanna justify her actions, we wanna rationalize her choices. You know what?

Because she's most of us.

Martha exemplifies some of our greatest weaknesses.

Maybe our worst addictions.

And no matter how bad we want to go back and redact this story, we can't!

Because Jesus has point blanked it.

Verse 41 + 42: "Martha, Martha, you are worried about many things. But few things are needed, in fact, only one thing. Mary has chosen what is better and that can never be taken away from her."

You know, at this point, on this particular Sunday, you might want to press pause right now.

Walk over to your closet, pick out some steel toed boots. Because Jesus is going to jump all over most of yall's toes this morning.

Anybody having trouble being still right now?

Hmmm.

Anybody feel like this limited mobility and access makes them anxious?

Anybody feel like they *need* to be out and going and doing?

Anybody feel like they *need* to replace empty spaces that we just cleared out or that the world took from us?

Does anybody feel like they *need* to get back to normal?

Do you feel like *you* aren't getting enough done?

A lil' bit? Maybe? Just a lil' bit?

In that case, how you doin' Marthas? How yall doin' out there?

But "it's not Martha's fault", right? I mean, it's not her fault. Jesus showed up unannounced. She wasn't prepared for that!

So now that Jesus is with her, *now* she has to get prepared in the presence of Jesus.

Verse 40 says "but Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.

What do you think John the Baptist meant when he said "Prepare the way for the Lord. Make paths straight for him"?

Do you think he was talking about literal paths?

Out there. Externally. Like, we need to higher a construction crew. The path is kinda crooked, it should be a little straighter for Jesus to come.

Probably not.

What do you think Jesus meant when he said "keep your lamps burning"?

Or how about the time that Jesus "It'll be good for those servants whose masters return to find them watching when he comes"?

Do you think Jesus meant that we literally need to have lamps? Like we should keep all of our lamps on our houses going at all times? Little cricket style.

Do you think Jesus literally meant that we need to be at the window, like looking out the physical window for a physical person to return?

I don't think so. I mean in the verses just before that, Jesus has just said "lay up your treasures in heaven. Not where a thief can come and still them or a moth can come and eat them, but where your heart is. That's where your treasure should be".

So *again*, Jesus is talking about something on the inside. Not on the outside.

Strike 1, Martha, that's strike 1.

We cannot claim that our business out there is needed in order to prepare for God.

We can't claim that anymore. We can't say "we have to be out there doing so that God will have a way here."

Because its not happening out there!

Preparation for the Lord doesn't happen out there.

Preparing for the arrival of Jesus happens in here.

And we have had plenty of time for that. This isn't something that we can just throw together once he arrives- "uh-oh, God is here! Now we gotta get ready, we can throw something together. We can put some food out on the tables and we'll be ready!"

We cannot claim that we weren't ready, we cannot claim that we didn't realize Jesus was coming.

But here's what we can do: we can make room, space in our hearts. We can clear a place for God, by removing all the pollution and all the distraction. We can let go of the fake stuff. We can let go of the idols. We can let go of the treasures that can be stolen by thieves or eaten up by moths.

If you weren't doing that before now, this is a uniquely opportune time.

You have the time. You have the space. For God to claim those vacancies in your life.

Try it.

You know what I think would happen?

I think when you try that, when God fills those spaces for you, then somehow this evil thing that's happen will get transformed into something good.

God is going to commandeer that evil and transform it into good. To take away, steal from the bad and give to the good.

Try it and see.

"Ok. Ok, Jesus" say the Marthas of the world. "You're right. You're right we should have been prepared in our hearts for you. But *practically* speaking, Lord, if we, the Marthas of the world, don't do the hard work, the stuff that needs to get done, if we don't do that, there's gonna be some real world consequences. Real world consequences. For example: our poor little home woulda been in poor condition for Jesus the Lord. For example: we will have no food, no drink, for the Lord. For example: we're probably gonna get ridiculed we're gonna get made fun of by our neighbors if we're not ready for God."

That's kind of what most of us think. I mean again, we're the Marthas. If we're not out there "doing", if we're not out there getting the work done, the important and hard work, then the situation is going to get worse and worse.

We have to do it. Martha, thank goodness, Martha gets that point. And Mary, I guess she's too lazy, right?

Wrong.

I'm sure Mary wanted a nice, well-kept house that didn't look like a poorly kept house. I'm sure Mary didn't want to be hungry and thirsty. I'm sure Mary didn't want to get ridiculed. But, first and foremost, Mary hunger and thirst for righteousness.

You know what else?

Mary does actually get ridiculed in this story! *By Martha* of all people.

Again, verse 40 "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her, Lord, tell her to help me."

Martha wants Jesus to get on Mary. To put Mary in her place.

Why? Because Mary is not helping. "She's not helping *me*."

"She's not helping *me*."

Spoiler alert: Mary is going to be much more helpful, because she is committed to helping Jesus.

And Jesus said to her "Mary has chosen the better thing and it will not be taken away from her"

Strike 2, Marthas, strike 2. The practical stuff that you think needs to get done, it's not real. It's fake.

The "real world consequences" that we're so afraid of, they're not real. They're fake.

"Oh no! Oh no a poor experience for Jesus! Or a poorly kept house!"

And Jesus said what about the poor? "Blessed are the poor"

"Oh no! No food! No drink!"

And Jesus said "Blessed are those hunger and thirst"

"Oh no we're gonna get ridiculed by our neighbors!"

And Jesus said "Blessed are those who are persecuted"

So stop.

Stop trying to fill in that space. It is not our job to make the world work.

This is the work of the Lord. Stop trying to find ways around sitting with God. Or you're going to miss out on a chance to be changed by God.

All that business that you were feeling before this. That's all anyone talked about, how busy we are, how busy we are.

And now we're stressed to get back to the busyness. And if you pull that off or whether you don't, in a few months you are going to be just as busy as you ever were. And good for you, nothing ever changed! Is that what you want?

Nothing is going to change, if we approach it like that.

But, if we learn something new, if we try something different, who knows.

What would that something look like?

What would it sound like?

"Be still. And know that I am God." says the Lord.

It looks like us sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Listening, seeking the kingdom before we do anything else.

Seeking the Kingdom first.

To see what God is going to do and how God is going to move.

God is going to take care of us in life and in death.

Ok, fair enough, Jesus. You made some good points here. We the Marthas need to prepare our hearts. We get that. And we the Marthas, as you say, need to stop being upset and distracted by the little things that are out there. *But*, at least we the Marthas are hard workers. I mean, we use what we got, and we work with that and we give a great effort and in the end isn't that all that really matters? Isn't that the most important thing- that we tried our best?

Nope.

Strike 3, Marthas.

Jesus did say "there is one thing that matters most", but that wasn't it.

What makes our actions and choices matter is that they come from God. Otherwise whatever we do is just about us.

And whatever we do is just stuff out there which is always going to be temporary. We have got to go inside and spend time with God.

A *lot* of time. Not a little bit. We need a lot more time with God. We have to seek that kingdom first and then go out. If we do that first, if we go inside first, then God transforms everything that happens next.

Whatever we do next becomes God's. Whatever work we do becomes an extension of God's work.

Martha is doing Martha's work. Mary is trying to join in Jesus' work.

What kind of work are you doing right now?

Whose work is it?

What kind of work are you hoping to get back to doing when all of this is said and done?

Whose work will that be?

I don't believe that God made this happen. I don't believe that at all. But I absolutely believe with every situation, when God comes into it, he can teach us.

So that has been my prayer and it's been my conversation with people. Over and over. I'm asking "Lord, what do you want me to see? What do you want me to hear? What do you want me to learn?"

Here is what I feel like keeps coming back to my mind, over and over and over. We live in a world full of people who are addicted to what's out there. We are just totally addicted. Complete addicts. You can tell right now. You can see people, this time period has really highlighted that addiction, because people look like they are in detox right now.

I mean, people are just itching and twitching, they're uncomfortable, they're squirming, they can't sleep, they're overcome by anxiety.

You know the only cure that they ask for, the only thing that they *need*, the thing that they want the most, is to get back out there. It feels so much better to get back out there. When I can just be buried in all that fake stuff. Just swimming in all of that distraction. Nobody wants to claim that that is true of them. Everyone wants to deny it. "That's not me! That's not me! That's not why I want to get back there. I want to get back out there 'cause I want to do *good* things when I get out there."

When you get out there? Why can't you do good things right now? What's the difference?

I mean, if you want to donate something, donate something. If you want to pray with people, pray with people. If you want to study the Bible, study the Bible. If you want to go to worship, go to worship right now. If you want to care for people, care for people right now. If you want to build a relationship with your friend from the past or your parent or your child or your spouse, you can do that right now.

You can do the *most* important, the one thing that Jesus talks about right now just to sit, sit with God. What's better than that right now?

To just be in the presence of God. To watch God. To listen to God. To see how God moves so that you can be moved by God.

That's what Mary chose. That's the miracle in this story. That Mary recognized "God is here. Right now." So Mary chose that.

Jesus said that was the better thing. That was the one and only thing.

We the Marthas of the world. We the Marthas.

We are upset and distracted by so many things out there.

I'm glad Jesus rebuked me. I hope that you feel like Jesus rebuked you. Because as always when Jesus rebukes us, he also invites us into a new behavior. A new way to be.

I wonder if Martha accepted the invitation. She definitely got the rebuke. The Bible doesn't tell us whether or not she did accept Jesus' invitation to change.

I wonder did she just go right back to working. Because she was using her energy and doing the best that she could. I wonder if she said "I'll wait to sit down because if I sit down right now, the 'real world consequences' are going to take their effect on us."

Or I wonder did it finally click for her. Was there a moment when she said "oh my gosh, God is *really* in my house. God is *really* in my house! I have *time with God in my house*, right now! I almost missed it! I almost missed it."

What about you?

When this is all said and done, what are you going to look back and remember?

What are you going to look back and see?

Will you look back and say to yourself "I had time with Jesus in my house, in my home, in my children, in my backyard, in my cul-de-sac, *in myself*, and I almost missed it."

Or are you going to look back and say "Those were the days that God moved in me."

Closing prayer

Let's pray together. **pause** Almighty, Loving, Powerful, Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, God, move. God, we pray that you would move. God, move in. God, move in us. God, move in us so that we can move with you. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Call to respond

Every Sunday morning the church has an opportunity to respond and that means something different for everybody. For some of you, this morning's response time will be a chance to prayer or a chance to sing. You can join the church from your home. You can give God authority and power from your home. You can respond however God leads you to respond. Maybe what we do this morning, maybe what you need to do this morning is to respond by just sitting still. Just trying to go in there. Whether it's uncomfortable or you feel exposed whether you feel awkward, maybe just as Gary plays, just sitting at the feet of Jesus. Listening, watching, and feeling. Let's respond.

Gary Interlude**Benediction**

For our benediction this morning, I'll offer these words: believe, sit, listen. God is in your home.