

Voices: Christ teaches us to slow down

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As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught.

But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said: "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

But the Lord said to her: "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38-42 NLT).

How many of us are the Martha of the story? I definitely am.

We all wear many different hats. Personally, I am a mother, a wife, a pastor, a daughter, a friend, a sister. The list goes on and on.

I switch through these hats many different times during a day. Most of the time, I don't even know I'm doing it. It can be exhausting, but it has become such a "normality" that slowing down actually feels out of the norm.

I was reminded of this on a recent Saturday when we finally had the day off.

It was odd to realize there was nothing on the calendar—no birthday party,

no church event, no dinner dates, nothing. It wasn't until that day when I was laying on the couch watching a movie with my daughter that I realized how strange it felt to have a slow day.

I was laying there feeling like I was doing something wrong, like something was missing, like I was forgetting something. Having a slow day felt out of place and wrong.

We live such busy lives and are on the go all the time. We are serving our church and our communities, and we are trying to spend time with our families and friends. Because we are always doing something, being still feels very out of place.

That day, God reminded me of the importance of *being* instead of *doing*.

Being instead of doing

Just like Martha, I get caught up in all the doing. To be clear, I strongly believe Martha was doing what she thought she had to do. After all, that was the cultural expectation, and there was the threat of shame and judgment about not doing what she thought she was supposed to do. She had a visitor in her home, and the expectation was to be the best host.

But isn't that the same today? We work hard to have the best programs in our churches to make sure everyone feels welcomed. We work hard to be the best friends or the best family members.

We join clubs or leagues, our kids are enrolled in all the sports, and our schedules are full of it all. We constantly stay busy, running around working hard at everything we do, because everything has to be the "best" to be worthy.

I believe the message Jesus wants to give Martha is she should not feel

ashamed for not sitting at his feet, but she is to realize he cares about her and who she is instead of all that she does.

She does not have to earn the love of Jesus. Jesus is inviting her to leave the busyness of the world behind and be with him in the stillness of his love and grace.

Jesus is telling us our worth is not based on all we do but on who we are and how much we listen to his voice. Jesus is telling us, even though his calling upon our life is to serve others, we also are called to be still and listen to his voice for guidance. Otherwise, how are we to do what he is calling us to do?

Christ reminds us

That Saturday, I asked myself: “When was the last time I did this with my daughter? When was the last time we had a day to just be and experience God’s presence through our quality time as a family?”

It was such a great reminder that the world wants us to stay busy and exhausted all the time. However, Christ reminds us we do not owe anything to the world, because he already came to die on the cross for us, and he paid for all our sins.

Christ reminds us we are to rest in him, and within all the work we do, we are to love ourselves such as he loves us.

He also tells us we are to love others as we love ourselves. But are we really loving ourselves as we love others when we do not take care of ourselves as we should? We cannot pour into others when our cup is empty.

Just as we take care of our phones, making sure they do not run out of battery, we are called most importantly to take care of ourselves, so we

may be prepared best to serve those around us.

Dear pastor, dear leader, dear friend, Christ invites you to be still and sit at his feet. He gives you permission to slow down and stop to dwell in his presence. All else can wait.

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