

“A Better Choice”

As I celebrated my 40th birthday recently, I can concur with a statement that I heard some time ago. The statement declares that in this life you are either experiencing a brief moment of peace before heading into a storm, in the middle of a storm, or exiting one. I am confident that as you examine your life over the last few years (at minimum) you will find that, for the most part, it has fallen into one of these three aforementioned categories. True? Of course it is! So, we can agree that there is certainly never a shortage of things to worry us, occupy us, or distract us on a daily basis. It seems to be the status quo to have a full agenda of life's activities. Consider that there are more economical, social, political, and career concerns to monopolize our time than ever before. Not to mention, all the gadgets and fads that strive to occupy our attention. In all of this, factor in raising a family and you can see why finding quality time to spend in the presence of God becomes increasingly difficult. The barrage of distraction, worries, and things that make us upset become our focus. They consume a lot of our energies and attention to the point that we fail to realize that God wants us to spend time with Him. He has made Himself available for it. This was the very point that Jesus made to Martha when visiting her home one evening.

In Luke 10:38-41, Jesus is visiting the home of Martha and her sister Mary. It is during this visit and verbal exchange that we can, unfortunately, identify our own actions with those of Martha. Allow me to explain. Mary chose to spend time with Jesus instead of getting busy and distracted with guest preparations. After all, Jesus was in her presence. The One who had been performing miracles, healing the sick, raising the dead, restoring sight to the blind, and changing lives was in her home! What else would Mary do but to choose to spend time with Jesus? What could have been more important than that? For Mary nothing was. Martha however failed to recognize the significance of the moment which was to get close to Jesus. Instead, she worried herself with preparations. In fact, the Bible says that she was distracted. Oh, I am sure that there were legitimate things that had to get done to accommodate her guests as was customary to do. I contend that Mary knew, as well, that there were things to do but she made a different choice in how she was going to spend her time and energy for the moment. I would argue that Mary realized that the preparations and concerns that Martha had would be there anyway in one form or another. Yet, she made the right choice in not allowing those distractions to take away from her time with the Lord. Not surprisingly, Jesus affirms and encourages the decision that Mary made to spend time with Him as “the only thing above all that is needed”. In other words, everything else can wait because those things are not going anywhere. He states to Martha that “Mary has chosen to do what is better.”

I am convinced that Jesus did not intend to demean or make light of Martha's concerns and worries. He is much too loving and compassionate to do such a thing to Martha then or to us now. Yet, He wanted Martha (and us today) to realize that there will always be something to worry about or get upset over that lobbies for our time and attention. There will never be a shortage of them. However, His timeless point is for us to recognize that where and how we decide to invest our time and energy can either help us through the worries, upsets, and concerns or keep us in the mire of them longer than we should be. Our Lord wants us to take advantage of His availability and presence. He desires that we embrace His offer. Thereby, choosing to do what is better.

By: Jesus Maymi

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