

Title: Choose Better: Prioritizing Presence Over Performance

Sermon Summary:

This sermon examines the story of Mary and Martha from Luke 10:38-42, challenging believers to evaluate their priorities in light of God's kingdom. The pastor emphasizes that Jesus isn't asking us to choose between good and bad, but between good and better. Using the metaphor of an optometrist flipping lenses, the message confronts our cultural obsession with busyness and productivity, revealing how we can serve Jesus while losing sight of Him. The sermon calls listeners to choose intimacy with God over societal expectations, spiritual formation over social conformity, and purpose over preferences. Through personal testimony about financial sacrifice and marital purpose, the pastor demonstrates that choosing God first—even when it appears irresponsible to others—leads to supernatural provision and peace. The core message is that focus on Christ is not lost but protected, and what we choose repeatedly shapes who we become.

Key Points:

- Jesus presents choices between good and better, not good and bad
- Mary's posture at Jesus' feet was radically countercultural and represented true discipleship
- Not everything that matters is truly important
- We often mistake urgent things for sacred things
- The most dangerous distractions are the ones that look responsible
- God has a pattern of using disqualified people throughout scripture
- Choosing better will often look irresponsible to people who don't understand what you're protecting
- You can serve Jesus and stop seeing Jesus; you can serve the church and not make it into heaven
- Marriage and relationships should be built on purpose, not just preferences
- Focus is spiritual warfare against distraction
- Seeking God's kingdom first leads to supernatural provision
- What you choose repeatedly shapes who you become
- The company you keep matters more than the material things you possess

Scripture Reference:

- Luke 10:38-42 (Primary passage: Martha and Mary)
- Matthew 6:33 (Seek ye first the kingdom of God)
- References to: David and Uriah, Paul (formerly Saul), Peter, Abraham, Joseph, Ruth, Daniel, Nehemiah

Stories:

- The pastor's brother's first optometrist visit when he couldn't see the chart
- The optometrist flipping lenses asking "better here or better here?"
- Personal testimony about losing \$50,000 in consulting contracts and wife leaving her job, yet experiencing God's provision

- The parable of the fisherman on the beach who worked 15 years to achieve what he already had—catching fish and eating with his wife on the beach
- Valentine's Day spent teaching Sunday school with his wife in the pulpit
- The cultural context of first-century Judaism where women were excluded from formal theological instruction
- The Jewish prayer thanking God for not being a Gentile, heretic, or woman
- Examples of biblical figures God used despite their disqualifications: Paul (persecutor), David (adulterer and murderer), Abraham (old age), Peter (cursing and violent)
- The illustration that a hot dog with good company is better than filet mignon with bad company
- Statistics about checking phones 96 times per day (every 10 minutes)