

Rhythms of the Soul

Title: Part 1 – Morning, Noon and Night

Date: June 9, 2024

Transition: Band Continues Softly

Who's happy to be in His House this morning? We're beginning a new collection of messages today called "Rhythms of the Soul." Help me preach my message, tell 2 or 3 people, "That has a nice ring to it..." If you are new here at the Suncoast, we like to group messages together in a collection around a central topic or text so that we can learn bit by bit, step by step over multiple weeks. So, as always, we invite you back as we continue this dialogue through the month of June.

Luke Chapter 10 is where we are going to be today. I want to preach a message I am calling:

Morning, Noon and Night

Rhythms of a healthy soul, morning, noon, and night. Luke 10, beginning in verse 38 says:

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. [Whose house was it? Martha's house!] ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are [Read this next part with me] **ANXIOUS AND TROUBLED ABOUT MANY THINGS,** ⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Would you pray with me for a moment?

[PRAYER TIME]

Hey before you grab a seat why don't you take :30 seconds and say "Hi" to some people around you. As everyone here in the house says "Hi," welcome to everyone joining us on our app or social channels. We consider you a part of our family so let us know how we can pray for you or serve you. AND if this message blesses you, consider sharing it with a friend.

So, this passage in Luke 10 might be familiar, but what is really going on that Jesus celebrates the one sister and to sort of publicly shames the other? Why the "Martha Martha," right? Why the double name thing? This is like when you were a kid, and your mom said your full name, when that happened you knew you were in trouble! Brian Alan Moon! Uh oh! You knew you were in trouble. AND doing the double name thing was no compliment to Martha either. So, what is it that has Jesus so happy about what one sister does and so disappointed with the other?

Well, let's be clear. Jesus is not highlighting one personality type above another. This isn't an Enneagram issue because there are Mary people and there are Martha people by God's design. Jesus is not saying one personality is better than another because while Mary people stop and notice the wild flowers, Martha people have the compass! If you get lost in the woods you wanna be with someone like Martha! Amen? Mary says, "Isn't this beautiful..." Martha says, "Look we are a long way from the trail and it's getting dark, we need to go!" The Mary people are like, "Did you see the way the light cascaded down on the forest floor and illuminated that one bright yellow flower?" The Martha person is like, "This way's north!"

You know what I'm saying? You want a Mary person on your team AND a Martha person on your team. Jesus isn't shaming her because of how she was built. He made her ENTJ. He knows her Myers Briggs. AND He loves that.

In fact, regardless of whether you're a Mary type or a Martha type, every single one of us should have the heart to serve like a Martha! Jesus put that very clearly, look at Mark 10: (v.43-45)

⁴³ But among you it will be different. [Meaning with His followers, with Jesus followers it will be different, how] ⁴⁴ Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant. ⁴⁵ and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to [Pull a Martha and] serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

So, clearly Mary is not better than Martha because she wasn't serving. And Martha's not worse than Mary because she was serving. Martha's problem was not what she did, but how she did it! AND what she missed out on because of that. In other words, Martha didn't do a bad thing, she did a good thing, but she did it in the wrong way. WHY? Because she lost her center. She lost her why.

Eugene Peterson—who wrote the Message translation of the Bible—he put it this way:

“Martha was distracted with much serving. Distracted means ‘not paying attention.’ It means not having a center or an anchor, being pulled this way and that way by whoever and by whatever.” – Eugene Peterson

One of the things I learned from older / wiser pastors (like Eugene Peterson) when I was first starting out in ministry and trying to cast vision and lead people and rally the troops is to not just focus on the what. Whatever it is that needs to be done. Don't focus just on the what, spend as much if not MORE time explaining the **WHY** behind the what! Why are we doing this? Why should we sacrifice? Why does this matter? It's all about the why!

When you lose your why, you always lose your way.

Martha lost her why and Jesus reminds her she has lost her way. Now, if she hadn't been the way she was, there would be no gathering for Mary to sit at Jesus's feet, right? It's like, “Oh, Mary, how great. We should all just be more like Mary...” Okay, well, you know, I'm thankful that Martha got the chips and guacamole. Because Mary with all her, “How beautiful everything is,” didn't buy any food! So, it's good that Martha was serving.

BUT she had lost the why behind the what. She got so wrapped up in the party being perfect that she forgot about the guest of honor. This is like me when I plan out a family vacation and I start yelling at the kids when they are not meeting my expectations. I'm like, “Cut it out and have fun! Do you know how much this cost? I don't want to hear another word out of you until we are having fun!” “Great, wahoo, best trip ever, thanks so much...” Right? If you lose the why, you lose the way.

Martha got so wrapped up in her party that she was planning for Jesus that she forgot about Jesus! She forgot about just simply being present with Jesus. And when we do that, when we lose our anchor, when we lose our center, when we lose our soul, when we get wrapped up with the distractions that easily set in, what happens?

Well, you're headed for burnout, that's one thing. You're headed for resentment. Eventually you're headed, strangely enough, for jealousy. And finally, you can end up in the dangerous position of trying to correct God! Right?

When you've lost your core, when things aren't right within you, what you do is you start projecting your issues onto other people! You become an expert in how other people should be living their lives. Martha knew perfectly how Mary should be Mary, which was to try and become a little bit more like Martha. But then she makes the audacious step to begin to chastise Jesus and to tell Jesus how Jesus should be Jesus!

She's gotten so wrapped up in the what and forgotten about the why and the who that she not only is angry at Mary, but she actually interrupts Jesus' message. Can you imagine? "Excuse me, excuse me. I'm gonna let you finish in a second, but Jesus, tell my sister she needs to help me. Why do you not care?" She's accusing Jesus of not caring! "Don't you care about my party that I'm throwing for you? Don't you feel honored! Are you not entertained? So, stop your preaching and tell Mary to come into the kitchen because I'm burning the potatoes!"

So, here's the heartbeat behind this collection of messages and really this has been at the heart of what God has been teaching me and those of us journeying through Practicing the Way. Write this down:

If the things we do for God aren't fueled by the time we spend with God we will begin to act like we are God.

We'll begin to act like we're God. We'll forget that there's a King and it's not us! That there's someone on the throne and it's not meant to be me, and it's not meant to be you.

Martha is a hot mess in this moment, but the point of this message isn't to shame Martha. It's to learn from Mary so that we can rise up and serve with a heart like Martha! But when we miss that moment, when we miss that purpose, when we lose our center, what ends up happening, we get distracted with many things. And then inevitably we end up, from the mouth of Jesus: (Luke 10:41)

...anxious and troubled about many things,

Does that not describe our world today? We end up giving ourselves over to anxiety and trouble when we have not made spending time with Jesus our center, our anchor.

Today, it's not just the dinner party that fuels this, it's also the device that we're trying to look at while we're planning the dinner party, because we're on Pinterest looking up this epic thing. And then we gotta get the photo for the thing. But we also have to have YouTube running because there is a video telling us how to cook this stupid thing. And if you get YouTube Premium it allows you to minimize it so the video can be in the background. So, now we can have the YouTube video continuing to narrate while we look back to Pinterest to see how much better that picture was than the thing we are making. Meanwhile, we're on Instagram, "Great, my friend successfully pulled off the thing... wait, why wasn't I invited when she did it!" Now we're mad because we're not at their thing. Oh, and there's something I need to buy on Amazon. So, now I'm on my laptop too. Alexa... add the thing to my cart!

How often is that us though? We're not in the moment, we're not engaged. And then inevitably it leads to distraction which leads to what? Anxiety and trouble. And soon we've lost our way because we're so divided, we're pulled in every direction. We're not giving much of ourselves to any of the multitude of things that we're trying to do on any given moment.

The average person is on their phone now for 4 hours and 37 minutes per day. Some of you are like, "I beat that all the time." That's not a good thing! But over 4 hours is average. BUT that does not include TV

So, here's something I have tried to get in the habit of doing, still a work in progress, but I'm trying to say, "No... Nope. I'm not speaking that over my life! I'm not busy. You wanna know why? I'm just standing here talking to you, and then I'm gonna go do something else. Do I have responsibility I have to carry? Absolutely! Do I have a lot on my plate? Affirmative! I've got stuff to do, but I'm not busy!

You see, being busy is a choice. Being busy is a state of mind. Being busy is a lie that you can get trapped into where you gotta jump over here and then you gotta go over here and you gotta be here but be secretly thinking about the other things you need to do.

We gotta learn from Jesus! Jesus wasn't crazy busy. Weight of the world bearing down on Him, came to save the world from sin, but He was going to weddings and stuff. You just see Him cruising around, "What are you doing?" "Oh, I got invited to this wedding. It's awesome. Oh, they ran out of wine. I'll be right back." It's like what are you even talking about? Don't you need to go die in the cross? "Yeah, probably. But My time's not yet come." Jesus is like, you can't push Me into being busy. You can't push Me into being stressed. "Someone pulled on my robe. I gotta heal 'em real quick."

I'm present where I am! I'm choosing to be here in this moment! I'm gonna look you in the eyes! There's other stuff happening in the world, but we are right here, right now! This is all we get. This moment. God is here. You are here. I'm not gonna be here and simultaneously be there! I'm not gonna try and live my life while secretly being jealous of your life! I'm gonna be present! I'm gonna be focused! I'm gonna be right here, right now! I reject the notion I have to be busy! I'm gonna breathe! I'm gonna drink deeply of this life that God has for me!

Come on, let's wake up today, where do you want to be? Who do you want to become? What do you want life to look like in 5 years or 10 years? **If you and I don't change our direction we will end up exactly where we are going!** Right? If we don't change our direction we will end up exactly where we are going! So, my question to you is, with the life you're living right now, where's that gonna take you? Where will you be in 5 years? Where will you be in 10 years? Will you be full of peace? Or will you have higher rates of anxiety and trouble?

Listen to me:

It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.

Amen? So, as we look at what we're doing and we go, "Well, I'm not happy and I'm not peace filled and I have all this anxiety..." That's OK because it's normal. It's normal to live that way! That's our society!

BUT today we are rejecting the idea and the notion of normal because normal isn't healthy, normal isn't what God's called us to! So, starting today let's live a life based on CALLING and CONVICTION, not NORMALCY and ADDICTION! Let's do what God's called us to do. Let's hear the voice of our shepherd leading us by the still waters, leading us to the green pastures, leading us to the table He's prepared for us!

If we want to have a healthy soul we have to have healthy rhythms, we have to learn to do what David did. David said in Psalm 1:31:

Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.

What's a child that's not weaned, that's a child that's still being breastfed. Have you ever seen a child that's ready to get breastfed trying to tear his mother's clothing off? He can't enjoy being with her because he wants something from her!

That's Martha in our story. You're with Jesus, but you want something from Jesus. Mary is like a weaned child. She now can, having been well fed because of the choices she made, now she can just snuggle up and be. I don't want anything from you. I just see the benefit of being with you.

Have you ever had those moments with God, with your Heavenly Father? Where you just took pleasure in being with Him and not needing anything from Him? If you are not cultivating those moments in your walk with Jesus then He would say to each of us today, "You are anxious and troubled about many things."

OK, so like, David, how'd you do that? "I've calmed the quieted my soul." That's amazing! I need that! I've got itchy fingers right now. It's been 20 minutes since I've touched my phone. How, how'd you do that, David?

Well, we're in luck because David told us how he put in place a trellis for the vines he wanted to grow. It takes a framework. Vines can't grow up without something to attach themselves to. So, the life he wanted to grow, the life he wanted to see inside of his heart, he knew what you need to know. There needed to be a trellis so that the vine could climb. And he tells us exactly what he did. In fact, he said in Psalm 55: (v.16-17)

But I will call on God, and the Lord will rescue me. MORNING, NOON, and NIGHT I cry out in my distress, and the Lord hears my voice.

That's what David did. David didn't just say, "Well, I'm gonna have my quiet time for 10-minutes in the morning and then get on with my day." Which let's be honest, the Bible app is amazing, and it will even guide you in a few minutes of Scripture and prayer, but come on, it's still on your phone and you are getting all these notifications and then you think of something you need to e-mail someone about and... right? I'm not knocking the Bible app, please by all means use it if it helps you get into a rhythm of being with God. That's great. I think it's so important. But it's just not enough! Because a couple hours into your day you revert back to being that un-weaned child. You are clamoring and cranky and fussy and self-absorbed!

David was smart. He realized that spending time with God in the morning kind of wore off throughout his day. So, what did he do? He put up a trellis for the new life he wanted to grow. He said I prayed morning, noon, and night!

And this doesn't mean you've got to take your entire lunch hour and devote it to being with God. It doesn't mean you have to never watch TV in the evening because you've got 30-minutes of praying to do. Listen to me, it could be as simple as a quiet two-minute break. A couple of deep breaths. Giving God everything and everyone. Recite the Lord's Prayer or Psalm 23. Realign your heart with God's. Remind yourself that He is God and you are not! Just tell Him that you love Him and how grateful you are for Him! Are you with me? A quiet moment where you shut your eyes and just say the name Jesus and remind yourself of His presence.

This isn't some magic bullet that will in one day relieve all your anxiety and trouble. But it's these disciplines, these practices, these rhythms, the small things done in secret that we are going to talk about that over time make all the difference. It's no one prayer session. It's no one worship song. It's no one saying the Lord's Prayer that's gonna do it for you. But it's the cumulative, freight train like effect when you do it and you do it and you do it and you do it and you do it and you do it.

{CUE SOUND}

Alan Stein Jr was a performance coach who wrote a book called "Raise Your Game." In it he talks about a time when he got to meet Kobe Bryant at the top of his game, and he asked permission to watch him train.

