

Well, we've been in this series, as I mentioned, lies that we believe about God.

And last week we talked about the lie that if we have a biblical church, really we shouldn't have to change anything.

We just keep rolling along.

We talked about all the reasons that is wrong.

It's a lie that life is all about change and all about seeking the Holy Spirit's direction, the direction of the Word of God.

I don't know about you, but

every time I pick up this book and I read it, God is asking me of some change in my life.

He wants me to grow.

He wants me to start this, to stop this, to think more clearly about this, to think less about myself.

I mean, it's all change.

And so that was a good lesson last week.

And then we had a church members business meeting was so positive, but part of that meeting was about changes we are making.

And so thank you for being willing to be bent out of shape a little bit, to have some of your feathers ruffled a little bit, and to be willing to follow the leadership of the Lord as He's got us on a journey.

Well, today we're looking at another line.

This is the final one.

And this is one that hits me hard, true confession.

So I'm repenting as I preach this sermon today, but it's this that God blesses productivity, even above intimacy.

And we're going to be looking at three passages of scripture this morning from the New Testament, Luke 10, John 11, and John 12, and telling the story about Martha and Mary that you're familiar with, right?

See, the thing is we Americans

We love our productivity.

We love speed.

And many times it's more than relationships.

Speaking of Africa, being there whatever country or town or village that I'm in, worship looks way different because there's no clock running, right?

And people are just free.

And it's an experiential thing.

And it doesn't mean that the lay leader hasn't prepared a message he has.

But a lot of it is, okay, you got a song, let's stand up and sing it.

You got a testimony, let's give it.

And it's this experiential thing and it's putting people over speed or over the clock.

Same thing in Argentina.

I led a couple teams down there and I preached a revival down there one time.

And worship in those churches was totally different than American worship.

Jerry Rifkin writes this, we are a nation in love with speed.

We drive fast, eat fast, make love fast.

We are obsessed with breaking records and shortening time spans.

We digest our life, condense our experiences, and compress our thoughts.

We're a culture surrounded by memos and commercials, while other cultures might believe haste makes waste.

We are convinced that speed reflects alertness and its power and success.

Americans are always in a hurry.

So we're looking at a false narrative and then a narrative of Jesus that is truth.

And the false narrative is this, and that is that Martha's way is best.

And those are the scripture references this morning.

So we'll start in on these.

You're familiar with these stories probably.

The background, Jesus' best friends.

Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary.

They live in a little town outside of Jerusalem, a couple miles away.

And he's coming to dinner.

And things aren't ready.

Some of you ladies and men have been there.

You got company coming, and things aren't ready for your company, and it's a stressful time.

And so there's some conflict that took place.

Let me read, starting in Luke 10, verse 38.

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

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.

Verse 41.

Jesus replies, Martha, Martha, you're worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed.

Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.

Now I know most of you have heard this story, have read it, have heard sermons on it before.

I just wonder, you don't have to raise your hand, it's a rhetorical question, but how many of you are Marthas out there?

And it's about, no, right is right, wrong is wrong.

And Jesus is our guest and get up off your rear and come and help me.

Don't, you know, don't leave it all for me to do.

And that's just the way you're wired.

And maybe you have the spiritual gift of service and that's driving that, right?

Or maybe you have a spiritual gift of administration and let's get things in order.

I know some of you are that way, right?

And so you, but Jesus,

I mean, we're going to get to his narrative, the true one, but he said, Martha, actually her way is better.

She sat at my feet and listened to what I was saying.

It's about relationships, right?

Well, let's look at the next story real quickly, John 11.

17 through 22 on his arrival Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days I'm picking up this this one of the most famous stories in the Bible right the death of Lazarus and Christ raising him from the dead Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother So this was you know a couple weeks

Bible students believe before Jesus was executed.

And so when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she marches out to meet him, right?

Mary stayed at home.

Lord, Martha said to Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.

Now, while this is happening, Mary's back at the house.

And she's mourning.

She's weeping.

Remember, for her, it's about relationship.

And even later on, if we had time to tell this whole story, we don't.

But when they get to the tomb, before Jesus calls out Lazarus from the tomb, he says, what?

Roll away the stone.

And what is Martha, anybody remember, trivia question, what is Martha's response?

King James, he will stinketh.

Right?

No, it's practical.

Administration.

Jesus, don't do that.

This wouldn't have happened if you'd have been here in the 1st place.

And now, no, don't do that.

The odor will be terrible.

It's all about stuff, not people.

Let's move on to the third story, John 12, 1-3.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

So this is just a little bit later.

Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor.

I think I would too if he raised my brother from the dead.

I think I'd give him a big dinner.

Martha served while Lazarus was among those who were colliding at the table with him.

Then Mary,

Didn't say she served, but look what she did.

Mary took about a pint of pure nard, and John describes it as an expensive perfume.

So ladies, think of it as a very, very, very, very expensive perfume, more expensive than anything you've ever bought at Sophia, okay?

Or whatever.

Is that the name of it?

Sofa?

Sephora, yeah.

Well, I don't shop there much.

Sephora.

This was like a dowry, right, for her to get married with one day.

And she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair.

Now, this wasn't the sinful woman who did a similar thing in another part of Scripture, wasn't that?

This is Mary.

And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

So counted up about 15 people were being served.

Martha must have left, learned her lesson because she left Mary alone, didn't complain about that.

But her MO is still the same.

It's work and busyness.

But I want you to know that in Jesus' economy, productivity is not the better thing.

And you can read the four gospels and see this.

Hard work and productivity is a good thing.

It just doesn't trump relationship and intimacy with the Lord or with someone else.

We are smart.

We're smart people.

We know that we have to have a balance of work and rest, work and play, work and worship, although I would say whatever job you have, it should be an act of worship to the Lord.

We know that there's got to be a balance between Martha's hands and Mary's heart.

Heart and hands, right?

A balanced life.

But sometimes it gets out of whack.

And sometimes we Americans, we're focusing on getting things done.

So your toughest choice is not going to be between the good and the bad.

That's pretty easy, right?

Your choice, your daily choices, your weekly choices,

with a temptation or a thought or whatever, a worry, a concern, some anger, some resent, whatever.

It's not going to be between the good and the bad.

That's really easy.

There's not a guy in here that's going to say, well, let's see, what should I do on Tuesday night?

Should I spend time with my Christian friends in a Bible study, in a life group on Tuesday night, or should I go out with the boys on a Tuesday night to the bar and get wasted?

That's easy.

It's going to be things like, okay, on Tuesday night, my child, my 4th grader has an opportunity to do yet one more weekly evening event where we can have a family time at home.

What should I?

It's decisions like that are tougher.

It's between not the good and the bad.

It's between the good and the best and the best.

More activity or more margin?

Work or relationships?

my testimony is I've taken lots of profiles and one of them is Gallup Strength Finder.

Has anybody taken that one?

Yeah, Gallup Strength Finder.

Yeah, so you know what my number one is?

It's Maximizer.

It's Maximizer.

I want to take something and make it better.

And that's just the way I'm wired.

But what that does

is it causes me to have to be able to be convicted by this message that I want to get a lot done in a little bit of time.

And sometimes ego comes in.

How much can I do in how little time?

And it kind of gives me a buzz, right?

And the downside is that can cause me to put things and stuff over people, over relationships, make good time,

versus make time good.

A funny story, Susan would remember this.

So years ago, I did, like, on a Sunday, we had planned a vacation to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, God's special place on earth, the Teton Mountains.

And it was a 14-hour drive, and we planned on leaving on Sunday after church, but I had a member, a young man, die tragically, set a funeral.

Sunday afternoon.

So I preached 3 services in the morning, scarfed something down.

We'd already loaded the car, the van, for the six of us.

And then I did this funeral for Greg.

And then we got done.

And then it's like we got to get to Wyoming.



We got to get to Wyoming.

And so we left like at 4 P.m.

And I'm just going to drive all night.

I can get there, right?

So drive all night.

and through the night to get to Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the morning.

Why?

I don't know why, but I had to do it, right?

And it's stuff like that we're looking back on and I'm going, was that best for the family?

Was that best for me?

Was that best for anybody?

So I'm just saying true confessions that some of you are probably like me and you put stuff before people sometimes.

That's Martha's way.

That's not Jesus' way.

And here's what I've discovered.

See, no matter how much one tries to do in the day, there's always more, right?

So you're always unfulfilled.

You never get enough done if that's your priority of how much you can do in a day.

So you're always unsatisfied.

And then, because you're a believer and the Holy Spirit speaks to you, then you feel convicted and you regret, why put things before people?

And so that makes you feel worse.

And the philosophers are right.

Lying in a hospital bed, I will not say, I wish I'd spent more time at work.

Right?

So this thing of time, time driven by the clock.

You know who invented the clock?

Monks.

They wanted a way to find out how to regulate time of the day for work and prayer.

So a clock was built.

And a certain time, a monk would ring a bell, signaling it was time to work, and then at another time, time to pray, and time to read.

And they worked a lot of hours, but they also rested a lot of hours.

And they prayed, and they had quiet time, and so their lives were in balance.

But in 1370 AD, a public clock was erected in Cologne, Germany,

And the city established hours of the day for the workday and set a curfew at night.

No longer was the work governed by the rising and the setting of the sun, but by the time clock.

And it gets worse.

In 1911, a guy named Frederick Taylor took it a step further and created a time study in a steel mill in Philadelphia.

So he studied the workers.

He actually had a stopwatch and would clock them.

And then he would write out reports.

And his mantra was this, quote, in the past, man has been first.

In the future, the system must be first.

Right?

And that's how we got how we are, Americans.

I talked with Vicar Donald Davis at St.

Luke's Anglican Church this week about me preaching there this coming Sunday.

And he said, yeah, I've been on holiday, right?

The whole month of August.

It's like Europe shuts down for the rest and the needs of the family.

Sounds like the Pharisees, though.

The system must be first, doesn't it?

That's what the Pharisees would say.

And so the modern message is this, and it's a lie that you are as valuable, only as valuable, as what you produce.

It's kind of like the lie that we started this sermon series with, that you've got to earn God's favor.

And the more good you are, as a little boy and girl, the more your Father will love you.

the better you are, the more he'll love you.

And that is a lie from hell.

So what if one of Satan's fiery darts, we know he's shooting at us, right?

What if one is not to tempt you about greed or lust or envy or worry or spending all your money on stuff that will never last?

What if it's this one, that what you accomplish determines

your worth.

What you accomplish determines how worthy you are to God, which then determines how much He will love you.

You are what you produce.

That's the lie.

Because if that's the truth, then you have to rush.

You got to rush to get more done.

Jesus never rushed.

God does not hurry.

the problem with rushing is then we miss the divine appointments that God has for each one of us in a day.

God's got somebody for you to cheer up in a day.

He's got somebody for you to pray for in a day.

You don't have to be out knocking on doors witnessing unless He's called you to do that.

But He's got some divine something for you to do in a day that's going to make a difference.

And the problem is we rush and we miss that.

We're not looking for it.

Why?

Because we want to do more.

But again, who gets the glory when you do more?

You, not God.

But when you look for divine appointments throughout the day and you slow down, then He gets the glory because He's engineered it all.

That's how He is more glorified.

I'm thankful that at certain times in my life I've been challenged to redirect in this area of stepping back.

One was when I was in Boy Scouts.

Any former Boy Scouts here?

Okay, Eagle Scout Steve here.

Order the Arrow.

Well, when I was getting the Order the Arrow, one of the things we did is out on a camping trip, they would take us

And this was like initiation, right?

And they would drop us off somewhere in the woods and they would give us a sleeping bag and a flashlight and that's it.

You spend all night out in the woods by yourself, right?

And then you come back and the next day you, at least we did, we worked and fasted, right?

And we couldn't say, it was silent.

And then when we were down at Baylor University, our college group would have different types of retreats and one of them was a silent retreat.

Did you ever go on one of those?

Yeah.

And so it was like, I don't know, 36 hours.

You couldn't say anything.

It was a college retreat and you couldn't say anything.

It was time to be quiet and listen to the Lord and worship and reflect.

And I'm thankful for those times in my life because with today's pace, we get out of calibration.

Parents, let me encourage you and grandparents,

Tell your kids, teach your kids that God doesn't rush.

Teach your kids and your grandkids also that God doesn't yell.

He speaks through the still small voice and through scripture.

And you can't hurry him up.

He's not the internet.

He's not the cloud.

You need to warn them that they may miss God's direction in their life if they hurry and rush and expect him to be God on demand.

So all that to say is Martha's way is messed up.

There's a better narrative and that's the narrative of Jesus.

Mary's way is better.

So in story one, real quickly, Mary was at the feet of Jesus listening.

Can I ask you if you've listened to God today?

Did you listen to God yesterday, last week?

Did you have your time with him?

Story 2, Lazarus had died.

Mary was crying out to God.

Martha was attempting to fix the problem and place blame.

Story 3, Mary was worshipping

With her emotions, her tears, financially worshipping God with her gift, giving her most cherished possession to Jesus, she wasn't content just to fix Jesus' supper.

All I'm saying is spending time with the Lord is better than productivity.

Taking time to listen to God speak through His Word is better than getting one more thing done on your list.

Warren Wiersbe, my favorite commentator, the most important part, he says, the most important part of the Christian life is the part that only God sees.

And I'm saying that to a church of servants.

If you're new here, a guest, this is a church of servants.

I'm looking around, I'm seeing people who love Jesus and serve His local church in all kinds of ways.

So there maybe is a danger here of not listening to this message.

Well, we know that Jesus preached.

this, but he also practiced what he preached.

In Mark 1, I'll just tell this.

It says that evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.

The whole town gathered at the door.

Jesus healed many, cast out demons.

He wouldn't let the demons say who he really was.

Of course, the demons knew him, pre-incarnate Jesus in heaven.

And yet he does all that in the night, and then very, you know, very early in the morning, what does he do?

While it was still dark, he got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.

And then Simon Peter and his companions went out to find him and exclaimed, everyone is looking for you.

Well, Jesus was doing the better thing.

Dallas Willard, a spiritual guru, if you read any of his books, he's gone on to be with Jesus.

He says this, ruthlessly eliminate hurry.

And the story behind that is, the Christian writer and speaker, John Ortberg?

He was about ready to take a new, pretty demanding ministry and he called his spiritual mentor, Dallas Willard, up for advice.

And he was, so they had a time to meet and he was prepared to write down all these sage, wise, bits of instruction for this new ministry to help him succeed.

And what did Dallas Willard tell him?

Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.

And then Ortberg said, okay, I'm writing this down.

That's smart.

Yeah, what's next?

And Dallas Willard says, there is no next.

Just do that, John, and you'll be fine.

Willard knew that John Ortberg had everything he needed to be affected.

His commitment, his understanding, he was smart, his experience.

He only needed to overcome the enemy of the Holy Spirit.

That is hurry.

That is rushing.

That is, I'm going to do it myself.

Even Carl Jung said this, hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil.

I read a story about a student at a college who asked the professor if he could take a shorter course than the one recommended, Jacob, right?

Shorter course.

Don't need the full thing.

And the professor said, oh yes, but then it depends on what you want to be.

When God wants to make an oak, he takes 100 years.

When he wants to make a squash, he takes three months.

It's going to take you a long time to become a professional Christian.

You know what I mean by that?

God's got to work on you.

We're all still growing up.

I don't care if you're in your 80s or 90s or whatever.

You grow till you go.

And the only way you're going to grow is through relationship.

And it starts with your relationship with the Lord.

Let me ask you, because I don't know everybody here, do you have a relationship with the Lord?

I mean, a growing relationship with the Lord?

Did it start when you call out to God and say, I need a Savior.

I can't be good enough on my own.

Jesus, I believe in who You are and what You did on the cross.

Take away my sins and You be my leader for the rest of my life.



Did it start there with you?

Have you done that?

If not, today's the day to put your faith in Christ alone for salvation.

But beyond that, are you dependent upon Him every day?

Is it about a relationship, a life-giving relationship, where no matter how busy you are, He comes first?

An experiential relationship, knowing that you cannot rush God and you can't rush your growth.

and that growth is not uniform.

It's slow and quirky.

Well, this week, let me challenge you.

Intentionally, and I'm preaching to myself and my wife, don't say amen.

We all know I'm bad at this, okay?

Intentionally leave 10 minutes early, which I did not do for church this morning, just to see what happens.

See if there is a divine appointment that shows up.

Drive in the slowest lane.

Ouch.

That's heresy.

Stop it.

This kills me.

Stand in the slowest lane at the grocery store.

Are you kidding me?

Are you killing me?

While waiting, look around.

Look at people.

Breathe.

Lock eyes with someone who's created in the image of God who might need a nice glance or a kind word.

Ask God to show you something.

Take a day and do a fast from TV, from Netflix, from an iPad, a smartphone, from social media.

Read something, pray, relax, go for a walk, go to bed early.

Because you've got a Savior who's calling out to you and saying, Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon me and learn from me, for I am gentle and humbled in spirit, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

That's His promise.

That's the guy behind everything I've been saying.

He invites you into that relationship.