

Good Evening/Morning. Welcome to our summer series, **Rescued**. It's been a full and wonderful week with our first ever VBS!! Here at Heritage we value all the generations and this last week we had a two-fold focused effort to invest in and train our older students for ministry and engage our community of grade schoolers around the truths of Jesus. Our students along with adult leaders did a fantastic job of creating a fun interactive environment for so many kids to encounter the God who Rescues us!

If you're feeling like you missed all the fun, no need to wait till next summer. Every weekend we have classes for our children and students, outside of this special month of July when we intentionally worship together. I want to encourage you to find a spot where you can invest! Take out the **Sign Me Up Card** in the seatback pocket in front of you and let us know where you'd like to make a difference in the life of a child.

If you'd like to get involved with children right here in Westerville Schools, talk to me about being a **Reading Buddy** during the school year or write Reading Buddy on your card as well and hand it to an usher as you leave.

Well last week Dustyn and Andrew kicked off our **Rescued Series** with a story about 2 lost brothers, one that was lost far from home and the other lost at home. Both whom God wanted to *Rescue to Party* to a grand welcome into the family based in the forgiveness and mercy of the Father.

This week we have 2 sisters, both at home getting ready for a party with Jesus but only one seems to really enjoy the party.

Last week, we left not knowing if the older brother ended up at the party even though the Father pleaded for him to come.

This week Jesus also has an offer. Will the sister accept? We can only guess what she will do. And only you can decide what you will do. The title this week is Rescued to Receive.

### **Luke 10:38-42**

**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!"**

**“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one.<sup>f1</sup> Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”**

Martha, she started out with such great intentions, the hostess with the mostess, generously opening her home to Jesus and His disciples knowing it would take her time and energy to get everything ready, make them comfortable and feed them and she was up for the task.

I’m sure as soon as she knew He was coming, she set out making all the arrangements. All the scriptures about Martha tell us she is wired to serve, thriving in her space ... mostly.

According to first century hospitality, it was shameful to turn anyone away from your door. Biblical hospitality, showing kindness and generosity towards guests and neighbors is a virtue that ought to describe all of us who belong to Christ.

**Rom 12:13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice **hospitality**.**

**1 Pet 4:9 Offer **hospitality** to one another without grumbling.**

Martha set out to do a good thing!

Luke Chapter 10 opens with Jesus appointing 72 disciples with instructions on entering a home and town and how to serve the people there. Verse 17 says the 72 disciples return from their travels with reports of their experiences. It’s possible that these are the disciples on their way with Jesus when they come to Martha’s village in v. 38? That’s a lot people ...

There was so much to get ready! We know the drill, right? Whether it’s Jesus plus 12 or 72, where would everyone sit? Would there be enough room, enough food and plates, enough to drink ...

Kids, I’ve got a couple prizes for anyone who can tell me what happens at your home when you are getting ready for guests?

Is it fun or frustrating???

What’s mom like? No, don’t answer that one!

Has anyone else ever started with hosting a little get together that grows into a remodel of the house? That might be an exaggeration but you know ... a little DIY that looks like a snap, a recipe you’ve never tried, some fun little Pinterest centerpiece, redecorating the mantle or the painting the living room, mopping, dusting, cleaning the bathrooms, reorganizing the linen

closet – why? I don't know – but maybe someone will look in there, washing the windows, hosing off the deck, power washing the siding, mowing, weeding the flower beds ... oh hanging those fun outdoor lights – that won't take long... and that's just for friends! What would you do if your teacher was coming, your principal, your doctor ... this is Jesus!

And Martha didn't have Costco, no prepackaged salad, ready-made veggie trays, chopped fruit, or pre-seasoned meat ready for the grill.

As a girl who gags over raw chicken with its slimy goose-bumped skin, I don't even want to think about what Martha had to do to get meat on a skewer!! I was so happy to discover frozen boneless, skinless chicken breast and Costco's \$4.99 rotisserie chickens have me convinced me that I never need to touch raw chicken again.

Well the guests arrive and perhaps there are more than Martha planned and somewhere between Martha's servant heart and her servant hands things start to fall apart.

The Bible says **that while Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening to what HE said Martha was *distracted* by all the preparations that had to be made.**

Distracted literally means – drawn away from, driven about mentally, over occupied, too busy about a thing.

Martha wanted to be with Jesus; she'd invited Him over. But, she was being pulled away by all the preparations, she couldn't quiet her mind or let go of her plans. She let herself be enslaved by her to-do list. Maybe it was keeping up social appearances or cultural traditions but she felt constrained to her tasks and separated from what her heart really wanted, what it really needed ... and Jesus wants to rescue her from all her worrying and scurrying.

This is so us, isn't it? Don't you struggle to have time with Jesus, too?

Do you ever sit down to open your Bible and your phone pings. You ignore it at first but then your mind is pulled away. What if someone needs you, what if you're missing something important, so you decide to quickly check, but then there's the weather, a news notification, a tweet, an Instagram photo and now 20 minutes later you're still scrolling thru photos and stories and pulled away from Jesus ...

Or you pick up your Bible heading for your favorite spot and think I'll just quick put in a load of laundry so it can be washing while I read and pray, so you head to the washer to sort a load, run back upstairs to grab anything else that could go in, wipe down the bathroom sink, pick up some toys ... and the baby starts crying, your friend starts texting you... and you're pulled away

You plan to spend time with Jesus after school, but then there's batting practice or music lessons, you'll get to Him later ... but now there's homework to be done, your friend needs help, mom has some chores for you, it's dinner and you still need to walk the dog and shower. You fall asleep to your reading assignment so wake up scrambling to finish it before breakfast and get out the door for another day ... pulled away from time with Jesus.

Kids you know what happens ***If You Give A Mouse A Cookie?*** The list of next things never ends!! You can't simply just give a mouse a cookie. I'm not saying don't feed your pets but you might want to make time for Jesus first.

One would think that with our power tools, washers, dryers, dishwashers, microwaves and instant pots, we'd have more time on our hands, but we don't. The pace of our lives never seems to slow; it just keeps ramping up? There's school and work and relationships and definitely things that need our attention.

But, I would venture to say that some of this busyness we heap on ourselves. Many of us, like Martha, get caught in too much. In an effort to make things more special, more beautiful, more satisfying as well as make ourselves feel more significant, more loved, more valuable, more accepted MORE-you-name-it, we just don't stop. We make non-essentials, essential.

And there's also this longing in us for the Garden, Paradise, Heaven, where not just our surroundings are the most perfect, peace-filled, beautiful and breathtaking but our souls are satisfied and at rest as well. **Ecc 3:11 says He has set eternity in our hearts** and our hearts continually long for peace around us and within us.

Maybe why one **French fry, one handful of peanut m&m's** is not enough, an "I love you" at the altar doesn't last for the entire marriage, why your boss's or teacher's well done doesn't last till next year's review or report card.

Why we can climb the highest mountain, run through the fields, scale city wall, kiss honey lips and forever sing ... *I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For*

Because this work of making things perfect, of restoration, of your soul's peace is Christ's work. He is making all things new. You won't find it outside of a relationship with Jesus and striving for it anywhere else will only pull you away from real peace. Martha's dilemma!

**Ps 23:3 He (the Lord) restores my soul**

**2 Cor 5:17 If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**

**Eph 2:14 He, Himself (Jesus) is our peace**

## **Rev 21:5 I (Jesus) am making all things new**

Whether it's trying to create the perfect environment, cook the best meal, break your best PR, finish your Netflix binge, keep the world's standards or pace, or win the approval of others, you need to know what tends to pull you away from Jesus, the only One who can meet your soul's longings. **Are you stuck, overburdened, like Martha**, doing, doing, doing ... even doing for Jesus that you don't have time to spend with Jesus?!!

We hear the tension and frustration in Martha's voice as she struggles ... distracted by all the stuff, discouraged, no one is helping, and doubting if Jesus even cares.

Finally, at the end of her rope.

**She came to him (Jesus) and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"**

In case we thought Mary hadn't done anything to help, apparently, she had been working alongside Martha but now left Martha to sit at Jesus' feet.

If I didn't feel so sorry for Martha, I'd have to laugh a little or give her a high-five. This woman has some guts! It was a bold move for her to interrupt Jesus with hot accusations telling Him what to do.

She's made everyone uncomfortable, lost the hospitable spirit she'd started with, forgotten that she'd opened her home to welcome Him, to create a space for ones to meet with Him. Distractions led her to do the very opposite of what she wanted.

This is such a good cue for us!! When you catch yourself - mind overrun, driven dizzy with details and a heart wondering if God even cares, then it is time to take a breath, take a step back and refocus on Jesus, reevaluate, readjust. Have you taken on too much? Ask Jesus for His wisdom. What can you let go of?

I'm guessing that all eyes froze on them ... WWJD what would Jesus do? Maybe the men were thinking the same thing ... Why isn't Mary helping? She should be in the kitchen.

Because it had been bold of Mary too! As a woman she sat in an uncommon place at Jesus' feet, a place reserved for men only, a place reserved for a student, a learner, a disciple. This is Rosa Parks in the front seat of the bus! In their culture girls weren't educated, women weren't given the opportunity learn. They didn't sit at a Rabbi's feet.

But Mary was eager and hungry to learn. She didn't let the undone tasks, opinion of her sister or any others distract her away from Jesus.

And I love this! Jesus doesn't just allow Mary's presence but He defends her!! He *rescues her from the norms and trappings of an earthly kingdom culture with its systems and structures that build walls of separation, social barriers, with cultural traditions and religious practices that divide and categorize people, putting them in boxes and trapping them in places Jesus doesn't intend.*

Jesus rescues us who are made in His image with value and worth, with promise and purpose. He *rescues us to receive* the kingdom of God, to a gospel of grace not based in works or the approval of man, not based in the practices of any tradition, system or religion, not in gender or race or social status but solely in the person of Jesus Christ.

If anyone wondered what Jesus thought of Mary's presence at His feet, HE left no doubt in their minds. Mary was right where Jesus desires all of us to be... uncluttered in His presence.

In that moment, Mary is shockingly rescued!!

And Jesus the ever compassionate, merciful Savior doesn't throw Martha overboard to drown in her to-dos, in order to rescue Mary, but rescues her as well. He heart is for both!!

**“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. <sup>[1]</sup> Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”**

As a man, a respected teacher, Jesus could have called Martha out on the carpet and sent her wounded back to the kitchen, separated from Him and no one would have blinked an eye. But this is Jesus, God in the flesh who came to be with us, to save us not condemn us and He loves her!

Martha's struggle hadn't gone unnoticed. Jesus saw her outward scurrying and knew the building turmoil in her heart. Perhaps He'd already caught her eye trying to get her to stop, motioning her to bring her overworked tired self to Him but she just kept going, trying to do all the “right” things according to her culture and her own expectations, trying to serve well but falling apart.

Jesus says, Martha Martha, not because it's her middle name – like when parents want us to know they mean business, but with a heart full of compassion, He gives her His full attention,

her eyes are the ones that matter to Him right now. Martha ... Martha, you're worried (anxious, troubled, fretful) and upset about many things.

I can imagine Jesus taking her worn hand, tears brimming in her eyes. He hadn't missed a thing. He knew exactly how she felt. He didn't reprimand her for her words. He wants our honest heart. He can handle our words and He had read her well. He speaks directly to her heart. You're worried and upset about many things ... perhaps she's worried for fear of failing, of not being enough, of being a disappointment to Jesus, not meeting the perceived needs, not being the hostess with the mostess ... upset over undone plans, lack of help and what felt so unfair.

Jesus knows and He's ready to rescue her if she will listen.

Notice that Jesus waited for Martha to poured out her heart to Him? He didn't tell her in advance, I see you've got a lot of irons in the fire ... just remember only one thing is needed.

He waited till her heart was emptied of its anger and hurt, her hands still before Him ready to receive help ... it just wouldn't be the help she thought.

Jesus doesn't respond with "Oh my goodness I hadn't noticed, I'm so sorry Martha, I didn't realize you had so much to do ... Mary why don't you help Martha finish up and we'll pick this up later. His solution wasn't to send help.

Jesus didn't tell Martha the things she was doing were bad or that if she had planned better, she wouldn't be so frustrated. He doesn't tell her that she has stupid dreams for wanting to make things special.

What He wants most is relationship with Martha so He challenges her, **few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better.**

Just like Mary, Martha's "place" isn't primarily in the kitchen but at His feet, to receive Him and all He has to offer, a new way of life for her of serving out of His love not obligated by culture, of knowing her acceptance for who she is not just what she can do.

Her heart had been torn, pulled between what she thought had to be done and what she wanted. Jesus wants her to receive His wisdom and rescue her with His peace, settling the argument in her heart, giving her permission to let other things go in order to have time with Him.

Jesus says to the weary and burdened,

**Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitted on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. Matt 11:28 msg**

Jesus wants to rescue Martha and all of us who get distracted by too much, burdened by our culture's expectations and consumed by the opinions and approval of others ... so that we can experience the abundant life He came to give - receiving His words, His presence, His wisdom, His peace, His forgiveness, healing and freedom in the depths of our hearts. But we only get that as we are with Him.

This is not about how we can fit Jesus into what we are already doing but rather about making Him the priority of our lives. Putting in the big Rock first! Spending time with Him because He's worthy of our time and attention and wants to pour out His love and wisdom for navigating our days and the troubles of this world.

We only have so many hours in a day, so much energy before we're toast, right? Every time you say yes to one thing you are saying no to something else. You need more than anything else to make space in your life to say YES to Jesus. Big Rock first!

When you find yourself distant, distracted from Jesus, your heart discouraged and doubting that the One who embraces the weary even cares ... you need to let go of some non-essentials that are keeping you from Jesus. I'm serious! We make time for the things that are important to us.

Jesus says to all of us, **Mary had chosen what's better. What can never be taken away from her.**

Martha got so sidetracked with baking bread, with doing good, that she was missing the Bread of Life ... more concerned with what temporarily fills our stomach, satisfies our flesh, than what eternally fills our soul. Jesus doesn't want that to happen to us.

What if Martha had stopped her doing and taken 20 minutes away from the kitchen to sit with Jesus? What if she said no to making a side dish in order to savor a word for her soul?

I'd like to think that she heeded Jesus's words and sat to soak in His presence for a while.

Later in John 12 at another dinner in Martha's home. She is serving again but with no complaint. Martha is providing her home, pouring out her energy, all her resources to shelter, nourish and serve Jesus and Mary is pouring her perfume using all her resources to serve Him.

Both sisters are worshippers who serve Jesus. It looks different for each of them.

God made Martha with a strength to serve in a certain way that makes her heart come alive. He is not trying to change Martha into Mary, to stop her from being the amazing Martha she is but to help her so her serving doesn't keep her from time spent with Him.

Jesus profoundly loves them both. It's not a contest of whose better or some kind of personality test ... are you a Martha or Mary ... a doer or devoted, a servant or a sitter, one or the other. But embracing both in our lives!

The Bible says it's not wise to compare ourselves so let's not do that to these sisters. Let's not do it to each other but rather be brothers and sisters that spur each other on to prioritize Jesus, serving Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and appreciating what each has to offer.

Decide in advance and decide again every day to make Jesus the priority of your life. If you've Joined the Movement here at Heritage, you've committed to not only being on mission, to serving and loving each other but worshipping God, encountering Him not just one time but again and again, surrendering to His ways... this is where we start over and over and over – every day.

Just like you need to know the things that tend to pull you away. You need to know the things that help you meet with Jesus.

Susanna Wesley – mother of 19 sat in the kitchen corner with her apron over her head. Some people have a favorite chair with their Bible and a journal, some a walk through nature listening to worship music, a teaching or in quiet praying. Be part of a community, a Life Group where others are pursuing Him so you can encourage one another.

I don't know anyone who has a growing relationship with Jesus that doesn't purposefully pursue it. Making time to be with Him, considering His words, listening, praying, worshipping Him, just enjoying His presence ... a friendship with Jesus doesn't happen on accident.

Jesus's words to Martha challenge us to keep Him first in our lives no matter all the other things ... even the good things.

Will you take a **20 min challenge** with me the rest of this month? Will you spend at least 20 minutes completely away from notifications and social media, from your to-do list, your work, the tv and all the other demands on your life to focus on Jesus for just 20 min. Read the gospels. Kids get out your children's Bibles... spend 20 min just with Jesus. Tell Him all about the cares on your heart and receive all He wants to give you.

Jesus Rescues us to Receive – a new life, freed of the world’s constraints, free from our worried rat race, our dysfunction, brokenness and sin to live embraced in His unconditional love with His grace and strength, according to His word, that eternally does a good work in us. Knowing our value and worth in who we are not what we can do. He wants us to receive His peace and a satisfied soul that it is well because of Him.

If you’re here and you’ve not started a relationship with Jesus, He invites you to come, to follow Him, to put your life in His hands and receive His forgiveness for all the wrong you’ve done, for all the times you did things your own way, instead of His. Pray and tell Him you’re ready, you’re tired of running your own life and want His peace. If you want help, I’ll be at the prayer room after the service as well as others happy to pray with you.

Take the challenge – **make time to be with Jesus and receive all He has for you.**

## Communion for Kids

Communion is a special thing Christians do. Maybe you've seen adults do this in the big service where they take a piece of bread and some juice and eat it. It might sound pretty silly but there's a very important reason Christians take communion.

### Communion Is Jesus's Idea

Jesus had this idea when he was having a special dinner with his disciples. The dinner was to remember something called Passover which had happened a long time before Jesus was born. It was a miraculous event where an angel of the Lord passed over the land and protected the Israelites from being killed by a mean king. Every year, the people would celebrate the Passover to remember how God had saved them. That's what Jesus and the disciples were celebrating at the time of the first communion. But, this meal was important for another reason. It was the last meal Jesus would have with his disciples. Jesus knew what was about to happen to him. He was going to go to the cross to die for the sins of the people. But the disciples didn't know that yet. So, Jesus used this last supper to explain what he was about to do for them.

### Communion Is a Way to Remember What Jesus Did on the Cross

That's why Christians still take communion to this day. It's about being reminded of what Jesus did for us on the cross and it's a time to celebrate how he has saved us. When you do communion the bread and juice symbolizes what Jesus did for us. The bread is a symbol of his body that was broken for us. The juice symbolizes his blood that was spilled to pay for our sins. Luke 22:19b *This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.* Communion helps us to never forget all that Jesus did for us. He came to earth, lived a sinless life, and then died for our sins. But should everyone take communion?

### Communion Is for Anyone Who Has Asked Jesus Into Their Hearts

This is important. Communion is for people who have put their trust in Jesus. So, you shouldn't take communion if you haven't asked Jesus to live in your heart. So, do that first, and then you can take part in communion! If you want to take communion you should talk to your parents about it. They'll help you to know if you are ready for it.