Unplug From The Noise — Delivery Transcript

Luke 10:38–42 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, October 3, 2021 · *Off The Grid*

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We are taking a break from the book of Revelation, so we're not going to be in that book this morning. If you have a Bible, you can open it to the Gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 10, to be exact. And we as a church went through the Gospel of Luke for about three years, several years ago. And some of you are like, oh no, not again. And I thought about preaching a different text and a different message, but I was just drawn back to this story because I think it so powerfully captures what it is that we're going to be talking about for the next two weeks as we take this break from the book of Revelation.

If you're new to Broadview, if you haven't been reading your emails— if you're new to Broadview, you don't know about this. If you've been around Broadview but you haven't been reading the updates, you wouldn't know. But we are about to start a spiritual growth campaign called Off the Grid, and we're challenging every member of our church to unplug from the noise and distractions in their life, in particular the noise of social media. I know that's my case, for many people my age, and probably for many of us in this room.

You've got a Facebook, you got a Twitter, you got an Instagram. Maybe you have all three. Maybe you've got the other ones, like TikTok and wherever the cool kids hang out. I don't know where the cool kids are now because I'm not a cool kid anymore, but there's all kinds of new ones all the time that are coming up and you just have a tendency, if you're anything like me, to spend hours and hours and hours on that, and it just creates noise and distraction in your life. There are good reasons for it.

You know, you can keep in touch with people and your grandkids, you get to watch grandkids grow up on Facebook. I get all that. But the challenge of the campaign was to say, I know it's not a negative or evil thing, but for six weeks let's pull away from it. And the more

important thing is intimacy with God. It's connecting with God by plugging into the Word. And so the campaign is to unplug from the noise and plug into the Word. And it's going to be a six-week campaign from October 10th to November 21st.

If you came in and you got sermon notes, you saw that next to those sermon notes was this little bookmark. I would encourage you if you didn't get one to get one on your way out. But it's essentially a six-week reading plan to go along with that six weeks of fasting from social media. I had somebody come up last week and say, well, I don't do social media. I said, God bless you. But his thing was he plays a lot of games on his iPhone. Or another person talked about, I don't do social media.

And I asked him, how much Fox News are you watching? and he said, well quite a bit. So I said, well that's a form of distraction. So if you're not a social media person, that's fine, but you probably have some noise in your life, distractions, and I want to challenge you to pull away from that and to replace it with this. Now, some of you may have a daily quiet time with the Lord. You're reading the Scriptures every single day, and I commend you for that. But my experience has been most people in church, though they want to have a daily quiet time with the Lord, do not.

Maybe they don't know how. Maybe they just never got into the habit of it. I hear all the time. I got started, I was good for six weeks, I was good for six months. I even went a whole year and read the Bible every day for a year, but then I stopped. And it's just not a part of your flow. It's not a part of your daily walk with the Lord. And it should be. It needs to be, especially in the noise, in the kind of world in which we live today.

And so unplug from the noise and plug into the word. That's what this six-week Bible reading plan is. It's one chapter a day, five days a week. Okay, so you got two days grace period on the weekend to catch up. But that's not the goal. The goal is every single day you just read one chapter. It's not a ton. You don't have to read it. You can listen to it. There's all kinds of good audio Bibles that are on the internet now. I use an app called Dwell that I like a lot.

So you don't have to be a big reader to benefit from this, to spend a few minutes every day engaging God in the Word, and then the time you would have spent in the noise, distracted by a game or social media or whatever, use that time meditating on the Scripture, meditating on the truth of God, and I think it will be of tremendous spiritual value to you. I think it will make your mental health better, your physical health better, your spiritual health will certainly be better because we live in a world full of distractions.

We live in a world that every day, there are things demanding our minds' attention, demanding our hearts' affection. And there's only one thing necessary. There's only one thing worthy of that full affection and that full attention. And that one thing is, of course, the

Lord Jesus. But we would not know that, and many times we don't live like that, because we've allowed the competitors for our hearts' affections to win out over the invitation of our Lord. So if you're taking notes, the thesis of my message today and the thesis of this passage we're about to read is that the more distractions you have in your life, the more diligent and disciplined you must be to stay close to the Lord.

I don't know if you've ever used walkie-talkies, any walkie-talkie people out there? All right, my man, the little guy over there. A lot of people don't use them anymore, but I've found that if you use a walkie-talkie, you've got to pay attention to your context. If say you were on a lake and you're in one boat and another person's in another boat, you could probably get a good mile, two mile distance and still have the walkie-talkies work. But you put that same walkie-talkie in the woods, two miles turns into one, maybe even half a mile, because of all the trees, all the stuff you've got in between you.

You take those same walkie-talkies, you put them in New York City. And then you really got a problem, right? You've got skyscrapers and buildings and all sorts of complexities and noise and obstructions separating those radio frequencies. Well the same thing is true spiritually. The more distractions you have in the life, the more diligent and disciplined you've got to be to stay close to the Lord. We see this illustrated in the story of Mary, Martha, and Jesus in Luke chapter 10, verse 38. Jesus is going to Bethany. He has one of his friends named Martha invite him over to dinner.

In verse 38, it says, while they, Jesus and his disciples, were traveling, He entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. This isn't the first time Jesus has gone to Martha's house. This was a friend of his, maybe was a retreat center type of house. You continue on and you read the rest of this passage, you get the idea that Martha's one of those type A go-getter task-oriented people. You know, the type— I need Marthas in my life. I don't know about you, but they are the get-'er-done type of people.

And Martha was getting it done. She was doing everything that needed to be done to make a good experience for Jesus when he came over to teach and to do ministry. She had a sister though, named Mary, verse 39 says, who instead of helping her in the kitchen or doing things that needed to be done to prepare for this event, her sister Mary sat down at the Lord's feet and was listening to what he said. And notice it says also sat at the Lord's feet, which means it was a little bit atypical, like, she also did it.

She wasn't supposed to do it, but she also did it. Now the reason it says also is because it was not typical for a woman to sit at the feet of the rabbi. We all know Jesus as kind of a rule breaker and a trendsetter and kind of breaking the mold in many ways. And this was one of them. The fact that he would allow women disciples to sit at his feet instead of just men disciples was out of the ordinary. And so here's Mary embracing the awkward saying, I need to hear, I've got to hear what Jesus has.

So you have a contrast between Martha doing, doing, doing, and Mary being with the Lord. And that contrast is the point of this, the point of this whole message, the point of this passage. So Martha in verse 40 was distracted by her many tasks. And she comes up to the Lord. Imagine the gall on this woman. She's going to tell the Lord what to do. But she comes up to Jesus and said, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Now men, just a tip, pro tip.

Sometimes when women ask a question, they're not asking a question for information. They're asking a question to make a statement. And this is a case in which Martha is not asking a question. She's making a statement saying, Lord, I don't think you do care, and all the things that I have to do. Are you going to tell her to get up and give me a hand? And in a move that I'm sure took Martha by surprise, not only does Jesus not agree with Martha and say, Mary, please get up and go help your sister, he denies Martha's request and rebukes her and says, no, Mary, your sister has chosen the better thing.

I know you don't feel like that. I know you think she's in the wrong, but she's in the right because she sees that one thing is necessary, and that one thing that is necessary will not be taken away from her. Mary has made the better choice or the right choice. And it will not be taken away. So what's the point? Jesus doesn't typically get involved in domestic affairs. Jesus is famous in fact for one guy coming up to him and saying, Jesus, help my brother settle the dispute. Tell him to give me half the inheritance.

And Jesus goes, well, who made me an arbiter over you? That's not my job. That's not my agenda. That's not why I'm in the world. But here he is in a domestic dispute between two sisters, sibling rivalry, and he takes a side. Why does he take a side? Why does he make this point? I think he makes the point because the point is an extremely important one that we need to know today. It's a perennial problem in every generation, and that is, your daily distractions, my daily distractions, if we're not careful, will rob us from the most important thing in our lives.

And that most important thing is intimacy with the Lord. It is communion with God. It is the thing for which your soul was created. It is the thing that when you have it in your life, you have an abundance of joy and peace and power. It is the thing that when it is absent from your life, you're quick to be anxious and insecure and miserable. Communion with God is the thing for which you were made, but the distractions in your life, good, bad, and different, the distractions have a tendency to rob you of that better thing.

And so we need this morning to ask and answer the question, what are those distractions? What are those things that pull me away? What are they costing me as it relates to my relationship with God and how do I exchange a life of distractions for a life of devotion? So the first question is what are they? And you need to know that whatever those things are,

they don't have to be bad to be a distraction that pulls you away from Jesus. Martha was not in the kitchen, you know, rolling a doobie, getting high, and whatever the case may be.

If you think, well, that's super bad behavior that pulls me away from Jesus. Maybe so, maybe that is the case. But that was not Martha's case. Martha's case, she was doing something good. She was doing ministry. She was trying to be helpful for the Lord. And even though she was doing something positive, it was pulling her away from Jesus. That's what the word distractions— that's translated, it's translated in English as distractions. The Greek word literally means to pull away from your point of reference. So my point of reference, I'm trying to fixate on communion with Jesus.

What is it that pulls me away from that? In my life it's good things. It's things like children. How many of you, as soon as you had a child, your quiet time took a hit? Yeah. How many moms? The more children you add to the mix, the worse your relationship with God gets. It's like my relationship with God used to be so great, and then I had children and now I don't love Jesus anymore. No, you wouldn't say that, but you feel like, I don't feel like Jesus loves me anymore.

I feel like I haven't spent any time with the Lord. It's true in your marriage, right? You get married, you have kids, it takes a hit on your marriage. All of a sudden date night's not so easy anymore. All of a sudden you feel like there's a growing distancing between the two of you. All of a sudden you feel like the intimacy is beginning to wane. Well, if that's true in your human relationship with your spouse, when a good thing happens, a good thing like children happens, how much more so would it be true of a spiritual relationship with your Heavenly Father?

For me, it's my job. I have a job doing ministry all day long. I read the Bible, I minister to people, I serve the Lord. But in serving the Lord, which is a good thing, we can all agree it's a good thing, but it can rob me from the better thing, the most important thing, and that is intimacy with Jesus Christ. In fact, when I feel guilty about something in my relationship with God, usually the guilt I feel isn't over time that was not spent with God. Usually my guilt is over things that were not done for God.

And yet here's Jesus saying, I don't care about the done, I care about the with. I don't care about the do, I care about the being with. And it's a mind shift that we have to embrace in the Christian life that it's not about what gets done. It's about intimacy, it's about dependency, it's about surrendering to the Lord. When it comes to our distractions, Jesus says, I'd rather you be with me than do things for me. It's a core gospel concept. And so what are those things in your life? The thing it always reminds me of, anybody ever had one of those North Face jackets?

I love the North Face jacket. I remember the first time I got a North Face jacket, my in-laws gave it to me as a Christmas present, and I felt like I was super rich. Because only I felt like only rich people wear North Face jackets and a preacher would never wear a North Face jacket. But now I got a North Face jacket and I was so proud of my North Face jacket. And I was so sad a couple of years ago because the you know those North Face jackets they have the little Velcro things on the arms so that when you're skiing, which nobody ever does.

But you're supposed to buy them for when you're skiing, so the wind doesn't get up in there. And so you'd kind of taper them together. It makes you look like you're all put together nice and right. But my little Velcro thing got some trash and junk in there because of whatever laundry and hustle and bustle of life and my Velcro wasn't sticking anymore. So my left hand was always stuck together, but my right hand was always flapping in the wind and didn't feel symmetrical and drove me crazy because of my OCD behavior and I don't wear that jacket anymore.

Now I wear my cheaper jacket which I can afford. But that always that picture has always, I think, kind of captured this dynamic that in your life, it's not bad things. Sometimes it's the death of a thousand cuts. You're busy, you're raising kids, you're working a job, you're doing all this stuff, you've got to make a living. And it's like Jesus barely gets the leftovers. Maybe if I have enough time and I have enough mental bandwidth and I'm not doing anything else, then maybe I connect with God. Or maybe for some of you, that's what this is.

This moment right now is you connecting with God. You do it once a week. You feel bad about it that you don't do it more than that, but this is all that you've got because every time I leave this place, the sticky goes away. Because all that stuff that's between me and the Lord. And I'm not telling you to get rid of it right now. I'm just telling you identify it. What is it? What pulls you away from Jesus? You have to know this, if not just for mental self-awareness, you need to know it so that you can cure it to fight for intimacy with the Lord.

So, first question: what pulls me away? Second question: what draws me close? They're two sides of the same coin. And not everybody connects to the Lord in the same way. I think there's a tendency when you grow up in the church to think, well, the preacher who reads the Bible and prays all the time, or my Aunt Martha, or my Christian hero, she's always in the closet praying and reading the Bible all day long. So if I'm ever going to be a spiritual person, then I've got to read for hours and hours.

I've got to know the Bible super good and I've got to read for hours and hours and I've got to be one of those mystical spiritual type people. And some people, because they're not wired that way, they think to themselves, well, I guess I'll never be spiritual. I guess I'll never really love God and have the Christian life like I'm supposed to have. And that is a terrible assumption because not everybody connects to God in the same way. There are people who

are more emotionally wired, who are kind of mystical, who connect to God through prayer, contemplation, meditation, all that stuff.

Good for them. But not everybody does, and you need to know it's okay for you to connect to God in a different way. Now I certainly prioritize getting the truth of God from the Scripture. Okay, don't get the truth about God from a magazine at H-E-B. Get the truth about God from the Scripture, but connect to God through different means. Some people connect to God through nature. Gary Thomas[1] wrote a great book on this called Sacred Pathways: Nine Ways to Connect with God. I would recommend it. One of the nine that he lists is the naturalist.

The naturalist is someone who connects to God through nature. And I'm one of those people. There is nothing that quite connects me to God, nothing quite so worshipful for me as being in a deer blind. Not killing necessarily. If it's a good harvest, that's its own thing. But watching the animals do what animals do, listening to the wind, the grasshoppers, the mosquitoes, the scorpions, the spiders. You know, they are evil, hellish creatures, but I'd still like to watch how they interact in the deer blind. Being in nature, especially if my deer blind is in a dead zone, so I can't get any cell phone service.

And it's just me and the world and the Lord, it's a worshipful experience for me. So it may be you. There's nothing unspiritual about that. If that's how you connect to the Lord, you need to know what draws you close. Other people, he calls them sensates, they connect to God through the senses. And so when they look at a beautiful piece of artwork, that's a worshipful experience for them. And I don't mean Christian artwork, I mean just good compelling art that's pleasing to the eye. It draws them to God. Some people, when they hear music that's pleasing to the ears, or even like this morning when we were worshiping the Lord.

And the band's just right and the mix is awesome and you're kind of caught up into this experience of not just lyrics on a screen, but a moment of artistic expression where your heart is caught up to God and you're engaging God in all of your senses, sight and hearing and touch and movement. That's a way to connect with the Lord. Some people love that. That's why they go to Christian concerts or they love the music worship through song because they connect to God in that way. If you connect to God in that way, God bless you.

That's good. You need to know what it is. And you've got to know, just because my way isn't the same as another person's way doesn't make my way invalid. Doesn't mean that I'm not a spiritual person. It just means God has wired you differently and you need to take the way that God has wired you and use that to connect back to him. So consider getting the book. The naturalist, the sensates; he talks about the traditionalist that connects to God through sacraments and rituals. He talks about the ascetic pathway. This is something I've been trying to work on of silence and solitude.

It's kind of growing on me. I used to not be very good at it. But figure out a way that connects you to God. Some people are the activists, they connect to God by serving other people, making a difference. Some people connect to God by caring for others, the caregiver pathway. Some people are contemplative, so they just sit and think about the beauty of God. Some people are intellectual, so they read books, they get degrees, they write books, they connect to God by loving God with the mind. What draws you close?

What draws you close? You answer that question. What pulls me away right now? and it doesn't have to be bad, it could be kids, it could be your job, it could be the good things in your life, it could be bad, it could be an addiction, it could be guilt that you feel because of some habitual sinful behavior you refuse to stop doing because you feel like you can't. But what is pulling you away from Jesus? And what draws you close? Martha was being pulled away by a good thing. Mary was being pulled close.

The second question that I want to ask is what are your distractions costing you? What are your distractions costing you? Because distractions have a cost. I know you feel like sometimes when you're on Facebook scrolling mindlessly for three or four hours and it's not costing you anything other than your time. But if you're not careful, those type of distractions, whether it's that or something else, have a spiritual negative effect. And we see this in the case of Martha. If you look again at verse 40 and you actually pay attention to what she says and what she does, it exposes a spiritual condition in her heart.

It says in verse 40 that Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to give me a hand. Then of course the Lord says to her, Martha, you're worried and upset about many things. Now this is not Jesus telling Martha off. Okay. Every time I read Martha, Martha, I think of the Brady Bunch. You guys remember the Brady Bunch? Martha, Martha, Martha.[2] This is not that. It's not Martha, Martha. This is Martha, I see you, I understand you, I know that you're hurting, I know that you're confused, I know this is unpleasant for you, but even though he has compassion for her, he still tells her what she needs to hear, what she didn't want to hear.

But what she needed to hear was that she was worried and upset. I did a word study on both of those two words this week. The word worried does not just mean she's slightly annoyed or perturbed. It's a word that means to have like an existential crisis. The definition, I love this definition that it's the monopolizing of the heart's concerns. You ever played Monopoly? A Monopoly is the biggest game in town. It crushes all the other competitors. So imagine a kind of anxiety that is so compelling, so big, that everything else in your life is minuscule to your concern about that thing.

This was Martha's heart. She had been monopolized in her heart's concerns, and the word upset literally means noise. It's a word that would be often used to describe crowds that were

really loud and obnoxious. Think of— I don't know if any of you were in band growing up, but in band the band students would play their instruments, whatever noise they wanted to make as a way of warming up before the band director would come in and say, cut it out. That's enough and help us to play together in unison. But that noise of just all the different instruments doing their thing on their own, that kind of cacophony of chaos, that's that word.

I think it's a perfect description of what we're talking about in this campaign. It's the noise of life. It's the constant drip, drip, drip. It's the constant bang, bang, bang. Hear me. Pay attention to this. Get angry. Martha's life had been consumed with that noise and anxiety that was crippling her. An existential crisis that if this does not get done, if this is not just so, if this is not the right way it needs to be, then I'm not okay. My life's not okay. I'll be blown away. And it was all because of her many tasks.

It was her distractions. They were costing her spiritually. They were having a devastating spiritual impact on her mental health and her spiritual health. And if you wanted to list them, you could describe them various different ways, but the first thing I see that she becomes is very judgmental. And she develops a critical spirit. It's the opposite of a Christian spirit. A Christian spirit is humble, it is thankful, it's grateful to the Lord for his goodness and his grace. Martha exchanges that Christian spirit for a satanic spirit that is judgmental, mean, critical, cynical.

She points the finger. You notice she no longer takes responsibility. Now her problems are her sister's fault. I mean, this is social media— perfect description of social media. How many of you get a little bit of social media in your life and you feel yourself getting a little bit judgmental? I can't believe she'd wear shorts like that. You know, or I'm sure nobody thinks that. Except the grandmas out there. But I can't believe— if my children were in this kind of situation, I would not let them do this X, Y, or Z, you get cynical, you get judgmental.

It's because you take your eyes off the Lord, you take your eyes off of yourself, you put them on other people, and you do the blame game, you do the comparison trap. Well that creates something. It is itself spiritually toxic, but it creates something else. And that second thing in Martha's life was insecurity and anxiety. Sociologists tell us that because of social media and our world today, we are the most mentally unhealthy generation that's ever lived. I'm not sure how they know that, but that's what they say. Because of the anxiety and insecurity, especially among young people who are on Instagram at a super young age, and because their filter doesn't make them look a certain way because they don't get enough likes because somebody commented something mean and they took that negative comment and they're obsessing on it over and over and over again.

It is crippling our young people, making them extremely mentally unhealthy, many of them on drugs just to get by their day-to-day life. It's a spiritual cost. The distraction has a

spiritual cost. Martha's insecurity is shown in the question that she asks. Lord, don't you care? Do you not care that my sister's left me to do this alone? What she's really saying is, Lord, I don't think you love me. I don't feel like you care about me. I feel like I'm not good enough anymore. I feel like because I've tried my hardest, I've done everything I was supposed to do.

I try to raise my kids to be good godly kids. I've tried to go to church as much as I could. I tried to do the Sunday school. I tried to read the Bible, but as hard as I tried, as much as I try to do, you're still making my life miserable. I still feel like you don't love me. And when you allow your life to be driven by distractions instead of resting in this truth that it's not about what you do, that it's about what Christ has done, that your identity is not what they say or your comments on Instagram, it's about who God says that you are.

When you shift from that place of resting in Christ to a place of distractions, it makes you anxious and insecure. There's a spiritual cost. So she was judgmental, critical, insecure, angry, or insecure and anxious, and that leads to the third one, which is anger. Anger is almost always the birth child of insecurity and anxiety. Insecurity and anxiety almost always give birth to anger. It's basically the emotions that you've been feeling are no longer internal. Now they're becoming external. They're expressing themselves outwardly. And anger is one of the things that sociologists say social media has done to us.

In fact, social media algorithms are built to profit off of your anger. I don't know if you knew this. These algorithms that they create, they use fear and anxiety and anger to keep people on the platform. Well if I can show them enough stuff to keep them angry enough or anxious enough or fearful enough then they'll stay glued to the screen and that means my advertisers will get more airtime and we'll make more money. It has a spiritual cost. You start looking at other people and you demonize them, you otherize them.

I would never do that. Those type of people are always going to be... And that anger gives birth to the last child, and that's demanding. She becomes demanding. And not just demanding like some people get demanding. You know, there's bossy people in the world, it's a personality type. It's not really an excuse for them being mean about it, but there are people who are wired to be in control. But she's not just that personality type. She is sinfully expressing all of these other spiritual toxins as a demanding spirit. And she's not just demanding her sister.

She's demanding the Lord. She's telling God off. She's saying, if you're really a good God, if you were really a wise God, if you're really clued in on what's going on here, you would do what I'm telling you to do. Why don't you do what I'm telling you to do? And I know none of us would probably say this out loud to God, but some of us live with these emotions as if we were God, we would do things differently, and if God was good, he would do things our way.

And we kind of get off on telling God the way he ought to run the universe, and the way he ought to run our lives, and the way he ought to do X, Y, or Z to make our life just like it needs to be, so we can do the right thing, go the right way. And who are you? Who are we? Who am I to say that to the Lord? The Creator of heaven and earth, the person who is in charge of everything that's ever been— who is the clay to say to the potter, why did you make me this way?

You are blind to the moment. And Martha was blind to this moment. The spiritual damage on her was so extensive that she no longer was even able to see who she was or where she was in relationship to this moment, telling God what's what. In fact, if she would have had a listening posture instead of a demanding posture, maybe she wouldn't have been in the mess that she was in. In fact, many of us, if you think about your distractions in life, how many of your distractions are self-inflicted wounds? It's not as though God told you to do all the stuff that you're doing that's wearing you out and making you anxious and insecure.

You just felt like it was the right thing to do. You kind of had a God complex and, well, I make my own decisions, I kind of run my own life and I'm going to do X, Y, Z. How many of us, if we would have stopped in prayer because you're having a daily time of prayer and communion with God, how many of you instead of just running off cocksure to do whatever you think's right, instead of if you would have asked the Lord, is this something you want me to do?

Is this a wise stewardship of my time? Is this going to be beneficial to me spiritually and to my family and leading them towards godliness? How many things would you not have done? Or how many things would you not do right now if you would have first stopped and asked the Lord, is this something we need to do? I think a lot of us would say I'd probably do a lot of things differently. I probably would not be in the kind of stressful situation that I'm in right now. And that's the point of this campaign.

It's creating margin. It's creating space to say stop. Stop before you add on something else, before you say yes to anything else. Stop and spend time with the Lord. Unplug from the noise. Unplug from the machine. Be still and listen, so that you can cure, alleviate some of the spiritual damage your distractions have cost you over the years. And so if these are the things that Martha's distractions cost her, then what are your distractions costing you? It's an important question. What do your distractions cost? Are the concerns of your heart monopolized?

Has the anxiety and stress crippled you yet? Because it is crippling a lot of people around us. We do not rule the universe. We cannot do it all ourselves. There is one God, and we are not Him. Only one master of the universe. His name is Jesus. The best we can do is exchange our self-reliance for dependence. Exchange our pride and arrogance for humility and surrender.

And that's what Jesus wants. That's what Mary understood. That's what Jesus is trying to get Martha to understand. So I know many of you are busy.

I know many of you are like Martha. You're type A go-getter type people, but there's a cost to that. And the more distractions you have in your life, the harder you're going to have to fight for what we're talking about. So if you're a Martha-type personality, God bless you. We need those people to make the world spin. But you need to know the more like that you are, the more distractions you have in your life, the harder you're going to have to fight for intimacy. So let me challenge you to exchange your busy, busy life of distractions for a more simple life of devotion.

And I'm not saying do it forever. I'm not saying get off of social media forever. I'm not saying never play another game. I'm not saying they're bad, sinful, evil things. I'm just saying stop for a minute. Take six weeks out of your life and ask the Lord to exchange those distractions for a life of devotion. And see what happens. He closes with this statement in verse 42. Martha, one thing is necessary. Mary has made the right choice, and it will not be taken from her. So two women, two totally different personalities, both people loved the Lord, but Mary will forever be known as understanding something that Martha missed.

And what Mary understood is that so long as she remained at the feet of Jesus, whatever else life might have thrown at her, she would be able to endure it because the thing that was most important was not going to be taken away from her. That phrase, she has chosen what is better, she has chosen what is most important. It's kind of a confusing thing to say. But I think what Jesus means by it is that when you get a little bit older in life you realize that the things that you used to really care about don't really matter.

Has this happened to anybody else? Like when you're five years old, the thing you're most concerned about is your blanket. I've got a three-year-old daughter who has flipped her lid because I used her blanket to put Briggs down for a nap. She woke Briggs up because she was so stressed out about me using her blanket. Well when Addie, who's three years old, when she gets five or seven years old, she's not going to care about that blanket. Do you know why? Because it's not her blanket, it's Blaze's blanket. Blaze gave it to AJ.

AJ's going to give it to Briggs because sooner or later she's going to grow up and realize it doesn't matter. She's going to grow up and the thing that's really going to matter is boys. Because when you're in junior high it's all about boys and girls and not having stinky armpits so that you can get a date. But then when you get to high school, you don't really care about the boys and girls as well. You care about them a little bit, but not as much. Now you care about where am I going to go to college and do I have good enough grades, and you have different existential crises in your life.

But then you get to college and you realize all those worries that you had in high school, they don't really matter. Now what really matters is getting the right internship and the right kind of sorority or going to the right school or not going to school because that's dumb, because I'm going to get a lot of debt, and I need to do something better, start a business, whatever the case may be. It's about money. And it's about getting somebody to marry you and spend the rest of their life with you.

But then you get married and you realize well that wasn't all that important. Now we got to raise our kids. I could marry anybody, I mean I can get along with anybody. And it changes, it changes, it changes. That's my point. The thing that's most important really isn't important. It changes. Your perspective changes till eventually you finally get old enough and you realize the stuff that really matters in life is not the stuff that changes. It's the stuff that never changes. It's the stuff that cannot be taken away from me.

It's the things of eternal significance. It's things like your relationships, it's things like your family. And in our case today, it's things like your relationship with the Lord. Because one day you're going to stand before the Lord in judgment and you're going to give an account. Jesus says you're going to give an account for every idle word you speak, every comment on Facebook. Get ready to talk to the Lord about it. And it's going to be burned away, and there'll be a judgment, and a lot of stuff— you'll feel pretty dumb on that day.

But there'll be one thing that doesn't get burned up, one thing that remains, one thing that endures, and that's your faith and intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ. It's that relationship you built while on this earth to get you through this broken mess until you one day stand before Him forevermore. That's the most important thing. So my challenge to you is to invest into that thing more than you do any other thing and to use this season for the next six weeks, starting next Sunday, to use this season to evaluate just how much those noises and distractions have been costing you as it relates to the most important thing.

And so consider it. And if you don't want to do Facebook, do something else. But what's the noise? What's it costing you? And will you choose, because it requires an intentional choice, will you choose to exchange the distractions for a life of devotion? Let's bow our heads together. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian . . .

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Gary Chapman"; Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God is by Gary Thomas (later editions are subtitled Nine Ways to Connect with God; spoken as "nine pathways for connecting your heart to God"). Gary Chapman wrote The Five Love Languages. Source: Zondervan publisher listing for Gary Thomas, Sacred Pathways. ↩
2. Transcript note: the famous Brady Bunch line is Jan Brady's "Marcia, Marcia, Marcia!" (from the episode "Her Sister's Shadow"); Wes is playing on the sound-alike with Jesus' "Martha, Martha" in Luke 10:41. Source: The Brady Bunch, "Her Sister's Shadow" (ABC, 1971). ↩