



gracefellowship

Series: Multiple Month
Date: January 28, 2024

Title: A Response of Worship
Passage: Luke 10:38-42

For the past 21 days you have been encouraged to join together to pray and fast 1 meal per day as we seek God for a better understanding of the gospel, a heart to share the gospel and for the gospel to take root in our hearts and renew us individually and corporately. This morning our desire is to respond to God in worship as we formally end the 21 days of prayer and fasting. This is a time to celebrate what God has been doing and we anticipate God continuing to do as he is changing us. Our entire lives are meant to be lived in the worship of God.

The whole Christian life is about coming to Jesus in worship. The gospel tells us how the God of the universe sent His Son to restore us in relationship with God by dying on the cross and bringing redemption to the world. We need to preach the gospel to ourselves every day because we are daily in need of the power of the gospel to transform us and hold us. Last week Andy talked about how we live in the balance and tension of being people who continue to struggle with sin but also who have a Savior who has forgiven us. The daily preaching of the gospel to ourselves reminds us that our sins don't separate us from God if we have embraced Jesus as our Savior. That's the good news! God is not counting our sins against us! We need to understand the gospel isn't something we respond to once and then put aside. No! We walk in the power of the gospel every day.

So here is the question of the morning:

How do we respond to God in worship?

And the answer is:

Abide in Christ and live daily in the glory and power of the gospel.

My hope is that these past 21 days have helped you begin your year seeking God in a fresh and powerful way. Now we want to carry on in our worship of God and continually be changed by His grace.

When we look at Scripture there are so many examples of people who are learning to abide in Christ, but one of my favorite stories is found in Luke 10:38-42. I want

us to read it together this morning and make a few observations that may help us grow as worshipers who abide with Jesus.

:: Luke 10:38-42

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.

39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

40 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!"

41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,

42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Does anyone in the room have a younger sibling? Did you throw up in your mouth a little reading that story thinking back to your childhood? You can just see yourself, like Martha, doing all the work, being the responsible kid while your sibling is watching TV, drinking a juice box...and then just throws it on the floor when their done!

I have to give a lot of grace to Martha! We often make her look terrible when we talk about this story, but think about how chaotic this moment would have been. Jesus and at least his twelve disciples showed up at Martha's house, seemingly unannounced, and she invites them in. Martha is an upstanding Jewish woman and Middle Easterners are renowned for their hospitality. It would have been unthinkable for Martha to turn Jesus and the disciples away. But that also meant that on a moment's notice she has to play host and feed 13 hungry men!

I guess everything was going okay as she prepared the meal until she looked out in the main room and saw her sister, Mary, just sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to him talk and teach. The Bible actually says Martha had been distracted with all the preparations, but this act of selfishness, in her mind, certainly got her attention!

That's when we get this amazing interaction between Martha and Jesus:

:: Luke 10:40

40 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!"

Has anyone ever had a moment where you've said to God, "Don't you care?" Look at my situation! Don't you care? Can't you see how hard I'm working and barely

making ends meet? Don't you care? Have you seen how my kids or my spouse treat me? Don't you care?

Martha's biggest concern is she is doing all the heavy lifting while Mary is doing the first century version of binge watching her favorite show. She's just sitting at the feet of Jesus soaking in everything He says!

Martha's question, "Don't you care," is a question of equality. It's a question of fairness. It's a question of justice. She feels slighted. And in our very politically correct culture we might expect Jesus would say, "Oh my goodness, Martha, you're right. I'm so sorry that I distracted Mary from helping you and from carrying her weight. I'll send her in there to help you right now."

But that isn't what Jesus says. Look at His reply:

:: Luke 10:41-42

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,

⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Jesus basically says, "Martha, you've got a lot of things that have taken priority in your life; there is a lot that is getting your worship and attention. You're worried and upset about many things- but there is only one thing that is needed: worshipping me."

Now, let me be clear- Martha isn't wrong for wanting to be a good hostess and making a meal for Jesus and the disciples. But her motivation gets exposed here. This isn't done out of a heart of worship, it's done out of obligation. Martha's story could have been so different if her service was done as an act of worship to God. Instead she was a slave to cultural expectations.

But here's something I love about the Bible's teachings and one of the great truths of the gospel- we are all people in process learning to follow Jesus. In John's gospel we are going to see almost the same scene play out, but we are going to get a very different outcome.

:: John 12:1-3

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

² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.

³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

It's subtle, I admit, but look at the dynamic now:

- Martha is serving without anxiety or disapproval about Mary's actions.
- Martha is no longer worried or upset.
- She is worshiping through her work and service.

So let me ask us a few questions this morning:

What does it look like for me to work to the glory of God?

What does it look like for me to parent to the glory of God?

What does it look like for me to serve/volunteer to the glory of God?

What does it look like for me to be a neighbor to the glory of God?

No more, "God, don't you care?" But now we say, "God, I'm doing all this for you as an act of worship."

The worship of Jesus takes priority over everything else in life!

Our response to God for the gospel that has saved us is to worship Him and give Him our allegiance. Because He died for us, we live for Him.

Today we are going to end our time together in prayer. We've been calling on God all month individually, now let us call on Him together.

Life Group Leader's Discussion Guide:

As we wrapped up our 21 days of prayer and fasting this week what was something God showed you as you prayed? Which of the Multiply Book readings impacted you most?

Ice Breaker for Bible Study: The story we are going to look at tonight is about two siblings who have very different approaches to life. Does anyone have a story from your life about a sibling who marched to the beat of a different drummer than you?

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42 and John 12:1-3

1. What held Martha's attention in the story? What words described her?
2. What held Mary's attention in the story? What words describe her?
3. Who do you most identify with in the story and why? (If possible, try to have everyone answer this question. Don't be afraid to ask follow up questions and probe a little. This may be the last question you get to tonight!)
4. In Luke 10, does Jesus favor one response to Him over another? Why do you think that is? (Leaders, if needed, point to the idea that Mary was in a posture of worship. Martha was doing good, but it was not motivated by a heart of worship)
5. How do things seem to change in Martha's heart in John 12?
6. Are the things you do in your marriage, raising your kids, at work, in your neighborhood, etc... motivated by worship of Jesus? If not, how could approaching those things as acts of worship change your heart and perhaps change the situations you find yourself in?

Spend time praying for one another and encouraging one another to push ahead this year with a focus on the worship of Jesus taking priority over everything else.