

Listening, Unburdening & Worshipping - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of listening to God's word and sitting at His feet, rather than getting distracted with other things, and the need for humility in learning to think like God.

Duration: 9:47

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Proverbs 8:32-33, Proverbs 19:27, Isaiah 55:2, Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 10:38-42, John 10:27, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:19

Topics: "Biblical Equality", "Spiritual Listening"

Description

This sermon focuses on the story of Mary of Bethany and how Jesus elevated women in society, emphasizing the importance of learning from godly women and embracing equality between men and women in the church. It highlights the significance of sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to His word as the most essential aspect of our Christian walk, contrasting the distractions of busyness and cultural biases. The message urges believers to prioritize listening to God's voice above all else, recognizing that true effectiveness in serving the Lord comes from aligning our thoughts with His.

Transcript

God is a good God. We praise Him that He continuously gives us His word to encourage us to lift up our spirit. Today I want to speak on three things, and those are three things that a woman called Mary did at Jesus' feet.

Mary of Bethany. I'm thrilled that Jesus came and lifted up women who were despised in Jewish society. A lot of Jewish men had great pride that they were men.

I think very similar to the culture we see in India today where women are treated as inferior. And that's why Jesus had a special care for women. If you look at the Gospels you see how He was very tender towards women caught in adultery.

A Samaritan woman who had been divorced five times and nobody would talk to her. He was like that. People who were pushed out by society, women, lepers, beggars, He's the same today.

And I'm sorry that in most churches they still treat women the way the old covenant treated them, the way Jewish people treated them, the way non-Christians treat them, because Christians haven't seen the new covenant. They have not seen that Jesus came to lift women to the place of equality with man, poured out His Spirit on men and women alike so that men and women alike would prophesy. And that's why after His

resurrection the first person He manifested Himself to was a woman.

God is the God of the weak and the helpless and those who are on the periphery of society. So it's wonderful when we worship God. Let's not worship a Jesus of our own imagination.

Let's worship a Jesus that we see in the Bible, one who can change our view to the view He had. I want to say to all of us who are brought up in Indian culture, you may not realize it. My dear brothers, men especially, there's a lot of heathen Indian culture in us we got to get rid of, especially in our attitude to our wives, in our attitude to our daughters.

Most Indian society does not treat girls on equality with boys and their family. If you're a Christian, it's got to change. If it doesn't change, you're not really following Jesus.

You're following a heathen culture and you'll remain like that. So I want to talk about Mary. See how Jesus appreciated her.

First is in Luke's Gospel chapter 10. We see him, her, at the feet of Jesus, listening. There are three things we can learn from Mary of Bethany.

And the first thing is Luke chapter 10, verse 38 to 42. As they were traveling along, he entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed him to her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to his word.

I want to learn from that. I'm not ashamed to learn from a woman. I hope you're not.

If a woman's a godly woman, I'm willing to learn from her. I've learned a lot of things from my own wife, and she shared some things from Scripture. And I'm willing to learn from Mary this wonderful thing of sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his word.

That's more important than all that we do for him. We can be distracted like Martha, it says here, was distracted with all her preparations. Their home was not a rich home.

If you read carefully in Scriptures, you see many things. For example, we read of homes in the Gospels where there were many servants. The prodigal son's father had many servants.

The Roman centurion had servants. There were other homes of Simon the Pharisee, who obviously had servants. But here was a home, we didn't have any servants.

That's why Martha had to go and work herself. And the woman of the house has to work in the kitchen. You know, it's not a very rich home.

And Jesus loved to go into these poor homes. But Martha, with great love and affection for the Lord, went straight away to the kitchen to prepare food for all these, for Jesus and his 12 disciples. And she was bothered that her sister was not coming to help her, and said, came to Jesus and said, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Tell her to help me.

And the Lord said, Martha, Martha, you're worried and bothered about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. One thing is needful, Jesus said.

In my observation of Christians, I have seen that most Christians do not believe that this is the one thing needful in their lives. This is one of the 101 things they feel are needful in their lives. And most Christians are like Martha, feel satisfied that they're doing something for the Lord.

And we think that because we've done something for the Lord and sacrificed something here and done something there for the Lord and his disciples, that the Lord's going to come and give us a pat on the back and say, well done. He'll say that if you have done the one thing that's needful first. If you haven't done the one thing that's needful, he will rebuke you and correct you for, even though you may say my intention was good.

You know, there are a lot of people whose intention is good and they may be doing the wrong thing. And many people like that. When Simon Peter came to Jesus and said, Lord, I'll never allow you to be crucified.

His intention was very good. But Jesus said, that's the voice of Satan. Get away from me.

So our intention can be good. Martha's intention was good, but she was completely wrong. Because the Bible says, God says, my ways are not your ways.

My thoughts are not your thoughts. I don't think like you think. You know, we think that God thinks like we think.

He doesn't. And if we are humble, we come to the scriptures and say, Lord, I need to learn to think how you think. And I need to get rid of my own way of thinking.

You see, like I said earlier, that's one reason we have this wrong approach to sisters and women in the church, because we want God to think like we think, but he doesn't. We're not willing to change to learn to think like he thinks. And who's going to be the loser? We're going to be the losers.

The church is going to be the loser, because we're not going to be willing to think like God thinks. Now, if we want to learn to think like God thinks, we have to listen. We have to come to the scriptures to listen.

Otherwise, we'll run around like Martha doing this, that, and the other. And at the end of it, we'll say, Lord, but my intention was right. The Lord will say, your intention was right, but you wasted your time.

You wasted your life on earth. I don't want to hear that when I stand before the Lord. More than 45 years ago, the Lord spoke that verse to me, and I've never forgotten it.

One thing is needful. Listen to me. Listen to me.

If I have a regret in my life, it's this, that I have not listened more. I think my life would have been far more effective for the Lord if I had insisted on listening. I've tried, but I see many, many Christians don't listen.

You know, the Bible begins with God speaking in chapter 1. In fact, Genesis chapter 1 is full of God said, God said, God said, God said. Every day, God said something. And whenever he said something, something happened.

If he said, let the trees come out, the trees came out. If he said, let there be animals, there were animals. When he said, something happened.

And the New Testament begins with that.

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