

Servant, Your Focus Will Determine Your Reality

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 the Lord 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 only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

There was a study done by a researcher by the name of Vicki Medvec, a professor at Northwestern University. She studied Olympic medalists and she discovered that Bronze medalists were happier than Silver medalists. Here's why. Medvec found that Silver medalists tended to focus on how close they came to winning gold so they weren't satisfied with silver. Bronze medalists tended to focus how close they came to not winning a medal at all so they were just happy to be on the medal stand at all.

I think that study reveals a fascinating facet of human nature: your focus determines your reality. John Milton said it like this: "The mind is its own place, and in itself, can make a Heaven out of Hell, and a Hell out of Heaven."

That is so true. All of us know people who can find something good to focus on even in the worst of circumstances. And all of us know someone who can find something bad to focus on even in the best of circumstances.

Case and point Martha: Scripture records that ***“Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.”*** And because her focus was off, and ***“being distracted,”*** her focus and attitude was off as well. We see that when Martha said to Jesus, ***“Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”***

There is a universal principle I want to share with you right out of the gate this morning: We tend to see what we’re looking for.

I think there are two kinds of people in this world: Complainers and focused servants. Complainers always find something to complain about, focused servants can always find something to praise God about.

Let’s look at this a little closer. ***Acts 16:25 says, “Around midnight, Paul and Silas were complaining about their circumstances.”*** That’s not what it says.

It says, ***“Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.”***

Paul and Silas were beaten within an inch of their lives but they still found a way to sing.

If we are going to remain focused servants, then we need the right perspective. Sometimes we need to zoom out. Martha was zoomed in on what was wrong and totally missed the fact that Jesus was in her house!!!! She was so busy that she missed her visitation, which goes to show you that busyness is not your friend. As a coach, I would tell my basketball players not to hotdogs or show boat with the basketball. I would say, ***“its motion without accomplishment,”*** and Martha fell into the same trap, Martha was distracted by all of the preparations that needed to be made.

Sometimes we have to zoom out to get the bigger picture. Listen to this college student's letter to her mom and dad:

Dear Mom and dad, I have so much to tell you. Because of the fire in my dorm set off by student riots, I experienced temporary lung damage and had to go to the hospital. While I was there, I fell in love with an orderly, and we have moved in together. I dropped out of school when I found out that I am pregnant, and he got fired because of his drinking, so we're going to move to Alaska, where we might get married after the birth of our baby. Your loving daughter.

PS. None of this happened, but I did flunk my chemistry class and I want to keep it in perspective.

Sometimes you need to zoom out to get the big picture.

So how do we zoom out? Let me give you a one word answer: Worship. Mary got it right when she chose to be at the feet of Jesus and realized the significance of having Jesus in the house.

Here's what worship does. It restores our spiritual equilibrium. Worship is zooming out and refocusing on the big picture. Sometimes when we serve, we get so caught up in not having enough people or not having lesson plans done, or people not showing up on time, or not feeling you are appreciated, that we forget that Jesus is in the room.

We need to focus on the fact that two thousand years ago, Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. It's focusing in on the fact that God loves me when I least deserve it. It's focusing on the fact that God is going to get me where he wants me to be.

So worship is reframing our circumstances, so let's talk about our **Response-Ability**. You have the Ability to Respond.

Let me give you an example: Victor Frankl was a Holocaust survivor who wrote about his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp. Everything was taken away from these prisoners. They were stripped of their clothing, their pictures, and their personal belongings. They even took away their names and gave them numbers. Frankl was number 119,104. Everything was taken away except one thing. Frankl said, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."

This is our Response-Ability.

The outcome of your life or ministry will be determined by your outlook. If you have a critical or complaining spirit, then you will complain till the day you die. This is something Martha learned the hard way.

We have the ability to choose our response in any set of circumstances.

Paul gives some priceless advice in *Philippians 4:8* when he says, ***"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about such things."***

As focused servants let's focus on what is right and not get so caught up with what isn't. Focused servants always know when to stop and listen when Jesus is in the room.