

## Entering God's Rest

Luke 10:38-42 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

ILLUS – Martha was a real doer. She was a very busy woman. She welcomed Jesus into her home, and that meant having 12 disciples too. How would you like to have 13 people for lunch? She's cooking, cleaning, coordinating the servants, organising DVDs of Ben Hur and The Ten Commandments. And Lazarus is fixing something, hammering away, making enough noise to raise dead. There's so much work to do!

All this time Mary's sitting and listening to Jesus' words – she left Martha to serve alone – and Martha's thinking, "Hey, if we're in this together, how come I'm doing all the work?"

It says, "Martha was distracted with much serving"; she even rebuked the Lord!

Why was she so distracted with the busy-ness of life?

She and Mary were wealthy, so they most likely had servants?

Something was going on inside of her; it was an inner state of her heart manifested outwardly.

Jesus says she is:

1. Worried – drawn in different directions – the word denotes an inward uneasiness.
2. Troubled – disturbed – this word denotes outward confusion and bustle.

In saying this, Jesus had cut straight through to the problem.

Mary wasn't lazy; she just knew how to prioritise.

Jesus said "one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part".

Mary was commended by Jesus for sitting and listening to Him.

John 12:1-8 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Again Martha served, and again Mary was at Jesus feet.

She poured out her precious oil to minister to Him.

The oil was valuable; an entire year's wages for a worker.

Jesus commended her because relationship is more important than serving.

Martha needed to learn how to rest in the Lord.

Mary had learnt to prioritise; she discovered that rest is an inner quality and can be maintained in the midst of outer turmoil if certain principles are adhered to.

## **What causes unrest? – Worry**

### **1. Worrying about basic necessities – food and clothing**

Mat 6:25-32 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

Jesus said that these are the things that the Gentiles seek after.

Our minds are NOT to be preoccupied with acquiring the basic necessities of life.

That’s God’s problem – “your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

The work-eat-sleep-work-eat-sleep, syndrome was never God’s intention.

There’s so much more to life than just activity.

### **2. Worrying about the future**

ILLUS – The United States Public Health Service apparently once commented: “No bird ever tried to build more nests than its neighbour. No fox ever fretted because he had only one hole in which to hide. No squirrel ever died of anxiety lest he should not lay by enough for two winters instead of one. No dog ever lost any sleep over the fact that he had not enough bones for his declining years.”

Planning for the future and preparing for it are essential but we should be careful that our minds are not preoccupied with what is going to happen.

We have to learn to leave the future in the future – in God’s hands.

And positive exciting things can be just as anxiety-producing as negative fearful things.

There’s a rest in God that you can never fully enter into if your mind is taken up with something that should be in God’s hands – your future.

Of course you need to give some thought to it, do some planning, and pray about it, but once you’ve done that and made decisions, there’s no use constantly going over it.

### **3. Worrying about what has to be done**

There are many distractions in this life, and Martha was distracted.

Here are some common distractions – houses, housework, cars, our talents (can distract from the Lord), sport, leisure (including TV), even ministry.

These things are not wrong in themselves but can become a distraction when occupying a place of greater importance than they should.

ILLUS – TV – Did you know that TV does not cause you to rest? One book on stress I read said, in effect, that generally, TV does not help you to relax. It may make you tired, but actually will often build your stress level.

Think of how the tension is built in so many movies with the music; or a private eye breaks into an office and is snooping around in the dark, and someone comes, so he hides in closet.

It's not relaxing you; it's building up your stress.

Is sport relaxing? A friend of mine was watching football's State of Origin, and just when his team was about to score, he got so excited he dropped the remote control, the TV went off, and he missed it.

Work can be really stressful too, when you look at that IN tray.

#### **4. Angry at evildoers prospering**

It's easy to get uptight when we see people getting away with things they ought not to get away with. For instance:

ILLUS – An aging movie star who's been married for 20 or so years, dumps his wife for some gorgeous young bombshell.

ILLUS – People lighting bushfires deliberately. In January 2002 there were hundreds of kilometres of bushfires in New South Wales, many deliberately lit. And many homes were lost.

ILLUS – A guy murders someone and gets off on a technicality.

ILLUS – And when you're driving, don't you get just a little bit angry when you indicate to change lanes, and someone zips up in the other lane and tries to cut you off?

Ps 37:7-10 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret; it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more.

The Hebrew word translated "fret", means to kindle anger, or for your anger to burn.

It's an anger that brings about the kind of attitude that causes us to question God.

"But they get away with it!" you might say.

Here's a reminder: Nobody ultimately gets away with anything.

#### **God's remedy for our inner turmoil**

Mat 11:28-30 Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy [comfortable<sup>1</sup>] and My burden is light.

##### **1. Come To Jesus**

If you want peace, you must first turn to the one who is the source of all peace – Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Many search for inner peace but overlook Christ, and yet He is the only one who can really help them.

1 Pet 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Even for many Christians, Jesus is the last one they turn to.

But you don't *have* to worry because God is caring for you.

Wuest's translation brings out the sense of the Greek in 1 Pet 5:7: "having deposited with Him once for all the whole of your worry, because to Him it is a matter of concern respecting you."

ILLUS – Suppose you deposit \$50 in the bank. Some time later, you ring them up and ask them, “You still got my \$50? You haven’t given it to someone else, have you?” And all day, you’re fretting: I hope they’re looking after my \$50. If you deposit money in a bank, it’s there to stay. You don’t go in every day to see if it is still there. You expect them to be looking after it for you.

It’s the same with the Lord: You give Him your worries, and you leave them there.

And He’s much safer than a bank!

Come to Jesus, He’s on your side.

You have someone fighting for you.

## **2. Take My yoke upon you**

ILLUS – The yoke was placed on the ox to pull a cart or plough. Without that yoke, it’s a lot tougher to do the job.

It’s tempting for people to wish they didn’t have to put on the yoke of Christ, but what they don’t understand is that Christ’s yoke helps you not hinders you.

Think of it like this:

ILLUS – Once upon a time a little bird (not an ordinary little bird – a spine-tailed swift [ which can fly at 171kph] thought, “I’ll be the best flyer in the country.” So he practised, and got faster. But he wasn’t satisfied; he wanted to go faster. So he thought, “I know what’s wrong. I’m too heavy. I need to get rid of some extra weight.” He wasn’t fat, so he wondered what he could do. Suddenly he realised he could be a lot lighter if he got rid of his feathers. But guess what? Without feathers, he can’t fly at all.

Christ takes our heavy burden and replaces it with His yoke – we need Christ’s yoke.

His commandments are not a hindrance, but our freedom.

John 8:31-32 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

Jesus said, “My yoke is easy (comfortable).”

Is your yoke too tough?

## **3. Learn from Me**

The principles of God are liberating if we put them into practice.

If we learn from Jesus, we will learn what He is like and that He can be trusted.

The only reason a person doesn’t trust Jesus, is because they don’t know Him well enough.

## **4. Listen to the words of Jesus**

Where did we find Mary? (sitting at Jesus’ feet)

And what was she doing? (listening to Jesus’ Word)

Heb 4:11,12 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The writer’s not just stringing together quotable quotes – these two sentences are related.

Entering God’s rest has a lot to do with the Word of God – we need to learn the Word of God.

Be diligent to plan into your life times when you read, and times when you study the Word of God.

It won't just happen by itself.

If you don't know where to start.

1. Read the gospels then the rest of the NT
2. Use your concordance (like a dictionary of Bible words that tells you where to find them) to do word studies on areas of personal difficulties or interest eg anger, marriage
3. Memorise your favourite verses

Learn the Word of God and DO IT!!

Jesus said, "You will find rest for your souls."

Are you:-

1. heavy-laden (growing weary)
2. distracted by the cares of this world
3. angry
4. troubled
5. anxious, worried?

God wants you to have rest for your soul

Is 30:15 For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

But if you don't even know Him, never given your life to Him, you cannot have inner rest.

You can purchase sleep from the chemist but you can't purchase rest.

The Bible says "There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked." (Is 48:22)

Heb 4:6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

If God is speaking to you, and you refuse to listen, don't expect to experience His rest.

Disobedience is pushing God away – He is the source of rest.

You cannot enter into God's rest if you reject the Word of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, D.A. *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew Ch.1-12* p278