

Proper 11 C
St, Luke 10:38-42
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St. George's Church Bolton
Fr. Chris

TOO BUSY!

" But Martha was distracted by her many tasks..."

Have you ever heard of the Gospel of works?

Many of us busy ourselves in life, trying to be *good* people. We are trying to boost our fragile egos in order to feel better about ourselves. Without busyness, we fear, the real me will dominate. The fear is the real me is of no value to the world or others. The real me is worthless. The real me is lazy. Perhaps at some level because of this, the real me is evil or at the very least, **bad**.

Somewhere inside us there needs to be a corrective voice that we are neither worthless nor lazy nor bad people.

I think that we believe that the harder we work, the more God and others will like us. However, before we complete a minute of work, God already loves us.

There are many colloquial sayings which indicate that staying busy protects you from getting into trouble: *"Idle hands are the work of the devil."* *"Keeping busy keeps me off the streets."* The inference is undeniable: *busyness is next to Godliness.*

Yet staying too busy may be the exact opposite. Staying busy may facilitate the risk you will miss out on life's priorities: what you

are really here to do. Here is some collected wisdom on the subject:

"Those who are wise won't be busy, and those who are too busy can't be wise." — Lin Yutang, *The Importance of Living*

"When someone tells you they are too 'busy' ... It's not a reflection of their schedule; it's a reflection of YOUR spot on their schedule." -Steve Maraboli

"Never be so busy as not to think of others."
— Mother Teresa, *The Joy in Loving: A Guide to Daily Living*

"It is not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?" — Henry David Thoreau

What if I told you that God was too busy and God has no time for you? How would you feel? Do you think this is the way God lives?

We live distracted lives, distracted by the media with which we are bombarded and distracted by all of the work which we must do. It is good to be productive, but life is more than our productivity graph. Life is about our relationships: with ourselves, with others and with God. Distractions are great opportunities to avoid being who we are, and we accept distractions perhaps because we are afraid of who we are without being busy.

We especially fear having those idle moments when we are not busy. I call them "cracks" in our time. The temptation now a days is to fill them up with doing, rather than allowing ourselves to simply be. We forget that we are not human doings: ***we are human beings.***

We love to fill in all those cracks of life. We have never been busier. It used to be that the little breaks in our time afforded us the opportunity to daydream, to pray, to be creative, to find inspiration for our living and our work, to simply breathe. Those little breaks or cracks in time are rapidly disappearing. How do you say? Think of the smart-phone. Think of how you pick it up and scroll through the emails you have recently received or the texts. Most of the emails I get, I don't know about you, are advertisements, specifically tailored to me and very tempting to read and explore. I can either choose to be with my ads on my phone or I can live with and be present to other people. Which do you think might be better? Playing with your smart phone can help you tune out the life going on around you by plugging into music or playing video games like Pokémon. Some folks are getting so lost in the electronic life of their smart phone that they are walking out into traffic, unaware of the reality going on around them, they are being struck by cars and then dying.

I can relate to Martha very easily! How often I have entertained guests in my home, busying myself with the busyness of hosting and serving. Except for me, the good hosting was not about spending time with my guests, but rather juggling things in the kitchen. There were many events in my home where I missed the whole thing. And like Martha, I felt like a martyr doing it instead of doing my work out of a sense of love for my guests. *Lord, do you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Please tell Mary to come and help me. [Substitute the name of your spouse or best friend or roommate right here for "Mary."]*

You can never get back the time spent in the kitchen. Feeling like a martyr is even worse than being just plain too busy: it takes busyness to a whole new level. And you can never get back the moments you should have spent but missed with loved ones,

friends, co-workers or neighbors. Think of the loss that Martha endured, having the living God visit in our home, and missing out on what He said and shared with her guests! Think of the opportunity missed to be in God's presence! *Hope you liked the bread and the roast lamb stew Jesus, and the shiny goblets for the wine! I spent the whole day polishing them for you!*

I started the sermon by asking if you have ever heard of the Gospel of Works, however, if you are like me, you may blithely follow this gospel unawares of your fidelity to it many days of your life. The Gospel of works indicates the belief that we may earn our redemption and salvation by being good people and working hard. And this is so easy to subscribe to it is ridiculous. We live by the so-called "*Protestant work ethic*" here in this society. Work hard and you will be rewarded. Work harder and you will gain the big prize. Work hard and you will measure up to expectations. Work hard and you will have your rewards. For many of us, these are elusive promises. We work hard, but cry out, as in the movie *Jerry Maguire*, "*show me the money!*" Our money never comes. It disappears into paying taxes and bills, into paying for simply existing. So the promise of the Gospel of Works is about as good as the promise of ever winning the Mega-Millions Jackpot.

When it comes to your spiritual life, the Gospel of Works is even more troubling. You see, you can't earn your way into heaven. You can't earn your way into God's favor. No amount of labor and good works can do this for you. You will come to see, that before you even start out, you already have these things. You cannot earn through good works to deserve God's love. God's love is a total, free gift. ***Undeserved, unmerited.*** At the core of it, our real friends and family love us the same way, not because of what we do, but because of who we are to them.

"...the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." Choose the good portion. It will never fail you and it cannot be taken away from you! AMEN