

Good morning church! I'm Chris Martin, and I'm a pastor here, and it truly is my pleasure to open up God's Word with you this morning. And that's what we're going to do, so, if you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to Luke chapter 10. That's where we're going to be. Luke 10. We want every person to have a hand on their Bible, so if you don't have one, grab one of the hard-backed black one under every chair. You can open your phone or tablet. Luke 10. If you open a black one from under your chair, Luke 10 is on page 868.

Many of you know that I didn't grow up going to church. I got saved at age 16, and that was really when I started on this journey of trying to figure out this whole Christianity thing. You see, I'm pretty curious by nature, and when I get into something, I want to figure it out, as much as I can. So, I just dove right in, and spent my first six to seven years of being a Christian on a journey to "figure it out". I went from church to church...movement to movement...picking up a little here and a little there. So, I'm kinda like a spiritual mutt...anyone feeling me on this?

And the thing about mutts is that they can be very resilient, and actually can be a sturdier dog over the long-haul because they tend to avoid genetic diseases that purebred dogs are more susceptible to. But the thing about mutts is that they can be kinda freaky and weird, as well. Right? It's like I have a little bit of Lab, but maybe some Collie, and then some Pit Bull. So, I'll go for a walk, play fetch, save little Timmy from a well, and then bite you in the face. Right?

Well, that's kinda how my early spiritual development went. I went from the Catholics, to the Methodists, to the Presbyterians, to the Baptists, to the Pentecostals, to those 'non-denominational' denominations. And it's strange, but each one tried to convince me they had it figured out. And each one had a plan for what I needed to do to follow Jesus.

So, I was baptized as an infant in the Roman Catholic Church...anybody else? Yes, I was sprinkled as an infant. And the Catholics have a process...Baptism, and then first communion, and then confirmation, and then a bunch more stuff. Right? That's the process. But I didn't go through with that because we weren't catholic, my mom was just trying to make sure if I died in infancy, I was covered...ok?

And I appreciate her for it! Right? Better to cover your bases with a little sprinkling of water than have your infant eternally separated from God in torment. Like, if that's your worldview, just in case, it's probably ok to take out some eternal life insurance. But we didn't really follow through with the Catholic plan.

And then I got saved in High School, and a pastor asked me if I had given my life to Jesus, and I said, “Yeah, I’ve given my life to Jesus, at, like, the last 7 youth camps. I’ll do it again right now. Let’s go! I just wanna make sure it sticks!”

So, he goes, “Well, have you been baptized?”

And I’m like, “Yeah, I was baptized in catholic church.”

“Oh no! You gotta be believer baptized. You gotta get dunked.”

“Alright!”

So, I got believer baptized. They had a plan for what i needed to do to follow Jesus: Believe...then get baptized. Made sense.

And then, a couple years later, I was a youth ministry intern, and we had some of the kids from our youth group go to a charismatic church down the street. And they came back and said that people there asked them if they had the Holy Spirit.

And they were like, “Yeah, of course we have the Holy Spirit. We’re Christians. We all have the Holy Spirit.”

But the charismatics said, “No, have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?”

And they were understandably confused. But they continued, “Well, have you spoken in tongues, cause that’s how you know you have had the baptism in the Holy Spirit.” And they proceeded to surround these 13, 14, 15-year-old girls and pray over them in tongues. You see, they had a plan for what’s needed in your discipleship with Jesus...it was just kinda weird.

And then in college I just ping-ponged all around: The United Methodists, and the Free Methodists, and then the Baptists (Southern, General, and Conservative). I tried Community Churches, Calvary Chapels, Bible Churches. I mean I was everywhere.

And then right after getting married I worked as a worship leader for ten months in a Nazarene church. And listen, in addition to each tradition having a plan for what I needed, they also had their own little corny jokes. Like, the Nazarene’s would always say, “Sure, John was a Baptist...but Jesus was a Nazarene!”

But I got in the Nazarene church, and they asked me a new one...they asked, “Are you sanctified?”

And I was like, “well, how does that...what does that...I don’t know that that’s possible.”

And they said, “Well, you believe in Jesus, and then you get baptized with water, and then in some churches you get a second baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, and then in the Nazarene church you get entirely sanctified. Essentially, you stop desiring to sin.”

And I said, “No, that ain’t happened to me. How’s that going for you?” And I worked at that church until they hired a guy who claimed to be entirely sanctified, and invited anyone to come to him for counseling. And... I tendered my resignation.

But what I’ve found is that every church, every tradition, has a plan for what you need. They know what is necessary. And listen, it sounds great, because if we’re honest, we want to figure this thing out. We want the silver bullet. We want the golden goose. We want the magical incantation that will finally get us to be the people that we want to be.<sup>1</sup>

And I am here today to tell you that I, too, know what you need. But it may not be exactly what you think.

You see, we’re in the middle of this ‘8 Marks of the Church’ series, and today we come to the sixth mark: The Sanctifying Church.

Jesus clearly said that a mark of a healthy church would be a church filled with people who are being conformed more and more into the image of the Son. That’s what ‘sanctifying’ is. Sanctification is a big theological word, but maybe the simplest definition I’ve found is, “Sanctification is the work of growing in Christ.”<sup>ii</sup> So, another word that we use synonymously with sanctification is discipleship. We are all about discipleship. Going Deeper with God. Growing in Christ. A healthy church is a sanctifying church.

But what does that mean? Because I would assume every single church that I checked out in my mutt-hood would’ve said that they are all about discipleship, too. They had a plan for what I needed to go deeper with God. But what is really needed for our discipleship? For our sanctification? Well, I think our text today will guide us. So, Let’s look at Luke 10 starting in verse 38.

**[38] Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.**

So, let’s start with just a bit of context here. Jesus enters a village, and into the home of Martha and her sister Mary. Now, this is most likely the same Mary and Martha who are the sisters of a guy named Lazarus, and Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Well, in that event we find out that Jesus is very close friends with this family. So, now he’s coming to their home... Verse 39: **[39] And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.**

Now, Mary has no lines. She is a silent player in this event. But her actions are what are important. She sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. A few things to note about the posture Mary took:

First, this translation—Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet—is very good, because in the Greek it is clear that Mary took the initiative in sitting by Jesus. This will also be reinforced in verse 42 when Jesus says that Mary has chosen the good portion. So, Mary actively chose to sit and listen.

Second thing to point out: this description of Mary sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to him makes her sound like a disciple. Consider only a couple of chapters back in Luke 8. When Jesus shows up in another town only to be confronted by a naked, demon possessed man, who lived in a graveyard, Jesus casts the demons out into some pigs. And in Luke 8:35 we read this [35] Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. The, now clothed man, desperately wants to become one of Jesus' disciples.

And Mary is now in the same posture. She is at the feet of the Rabbi, in the posture of discipleship. She is very literally 'sitting under his teaching'. So, Mary is displaying that a disciple chooses to sit and listen to Jesus. Now, let's contrast that posture to what we'll see in verse 40. [40] But Martha was distracted with much serving. While Mary is postured at the feet of Jesus, attentive to him. Martha is distracted.

Distracted indicates "being pulled away" by something. Interestingly, one of the meanings of the word distraction comes from a French term related to a cruel form of torture. Literally, in medieval France, the form of torture that was set-aside for the very worst offenders, was when the offender had their four limbs tied to four horses, and it's like, 'Giddy-up'; they got dis-tracted!<sup>iii</sup>

So, Martha is distracted with much serving. And this is a vivid scene. Martha is being pulled away, preparing the meal for Jesus and the others. She's hard at work, and Mary seems to be relaxing at the master's feet, doing nothing, at least to Martha's eyes.

Real quick...how many doers do we have in here? You'd consider yourself a doer, a fixer. Maybe you're type 'a'. You get stuff done. You take care of business. Anyone? I'll admit it. That's me. And so, when I read this, it takes everything in my not to just scream at Mary... "get your lazy ... up and help with the food." Do we have any Martha sympathizers in here? You too? Ok, good. Let's see what happens: [40] But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

Now, just for a second, think about what has happened. Martha just rebuked Jesus! She tells Jesus what to do. Her distraction has gotten her to the point where she thinks she knows what Jesus ought to be doing. She knows better. You ever been there? ‘Jesus, why don’t you do what I think you should do? Why don’t you do it that way?’ Tell her to help me!

But maybe even more startling to me as I studied this passage was what Martha said before she starts barking orders at Jesus. “Lord, do you not care?” You been there? You ever questioned Jesus’ care for you because of how he is acting? ‘Jesus, do you even care? Do you even love me?’

You see, what this shows us is that distraction and the feeling of being overwhelmed by it often comes from being terribly out of fellowship with Jesus. Martha is being ripped apart, and she doesn’t even see it. But look at Jesus’ response in verse 41. [41] But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,

Oh, there’s so much crammed into this verse, but let’s start with Jesus’ address of Martha. He says, “Martha, Martha.” This is a tender response. The ‘double’ is a sign of emotion. It’s not meant to be taken as Jesus chiding her for her response. You see, all through Luke’s Gospel he uses this double emphatic to evoke tender emotion. It’s almost as if he’s responding to her doubts: “Jesus, don’t you care about me?”

“Martha, Martha.” This is a sweet response from the savior who loves her very deeply.

And then his next words are so important. “You are anxious and troubled about many things.” I think this is so good and important for us to get, so, listen to me here: Jesus isn’t busting her for working too much. Jesus doesn’t tell Martha, “You’re serving too much! Get out of the kitchen! Don’t you remember how I fed 5000 people with a kid’s Lunchable? And you’re worried about this?!? Martha, Martha.”

No! That’s not at all what he does. Jesus’ critique is not of what Martha is doing. His critique is of the posture of her heart. You are anxious and troubled about many things. Martha is too busy for Jesus, even though she is doing a good thing. You ever feel too busy for Jesus? Now, let’s finish this passage. Verse 42: Jesus goes on... [42] but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

There’s one thing. There’s one necessary thing. There’s one good thing. There’s one portion. And it will not be taken from Mary. The language evokes an image that Martha is attempting to steal something from Mary. Are you aware that being troubled and anxious robs us of joy? Of the joy found in posturing ourselves at the feet of Jesus as his disciples. You see, back to what I was saying in my 5

introduction: there is one thing that is needed for your discipleship. One thing that is needed for the sanctifying church. One thing needed if you're a Christian. And that one thing is to have your heart postured at the feet of Jesus.

One author speculated that if Martha, at that very moment, were to sit down at the feet of Jesus. Just in a huff. Just begrudgingly sat down. She would still be distracted by everything on her mind. But if Jesus were to turn to Mary and ask, "Would you go help your sister?" She could get up and help with the many household chores without being worried or upset.<sup>iv</sup> That's the heart posture of a disciple.

Now, the reason why I wanted to preach on this passage is because I am a recovering Martha. If you're new with us, this is the first time I'm preaching in the last 6 months. And pastors don't tend to take 6-months-off from their primary job duty. But I found myself in a Martha spot. I was troubled and anxious with many things, and I was neglecting the one necessary and good thing. And it led me to unhealth and sin. But God, in his grace and loving kindness, sat me down.

So, what do we do with something like this? Because I don't want for you, or again for me, to get to the point where Jesus has to sit us down. I want us to be like Mary, who took the initiative to sit down at Jesus' feet. So, let me borrow an illustration from Matt Chandler, that I think is helpful.

Last week it rained. Like, rained in a way that it doesn't normally rain in Colorado, right? If we get rain at all, it normally comes in a quick 15-minute shower, and then it's over and blue skies reign again. But last week, a couple of times I looked at the weather app on my phone and it predicted rain for multiple hours. And then it rained and rained and rained, for hours and hours. And there was lightning and thunder. I mean, it was not like the rain we normally experience here. And I don't know what was more shocking, the fact that it rained like that, or the fact that Apple weather actually predicted something correctly?

But that reminded me of something: the only way to get wet, was to be outside. I was watching the rain from inside, and I didn't get a drop on me. Nobody gets wet when they're inside...only when you're outside. And you're like, "Uh...yeah! What the heck does that illustration have to do with anything? Maybe he shouldn't have taken 6-months off." Just bear with me!

Now, I'm going to give us 4 really practical things that will help us get ourselves postured at the feet of Christ. And these four things don't guarantee rain, but they put you in the place where rain can occur, so, when it does rain, you get wet. Ok?

So, what we're about to talk about is getting ourselves under the faucet. It doesn't turn the faucet on. It just puts us under it, so that if God, in his mercy, would turn it on, we'll get drenched. Alright? Here we go: four things to get us postured at the feet of Jesus.

First, silence. You've got to sit and listen. This requires you to get alone, to minimize distractions, and just be with Jesus. We see this all through the scriptures: but God doesn't scream at you...he whispers. And if you aren't quiet, if you don't practice silence, you won't hear his whisper. We have a God who calls us into the quiet so he can whisper to our hearts.

And I've started practicing this. For real, every morning I get up fifteen minutes earlier than I need to. And I start my coffee brewing, cause silence or not, I need coffee, but before I open my bible or prayer journal—or hear me on this one, cause it's the hardest—before I look at my phone. Ok? Before any of that, I just start with 10-15 minutes of silence. And if that's too long for you, go for 2-5 minutes. Just do it. And listen, it's awkward. Ok? Maryse has come downstairs at times to find me staring blankly at the wall. But I just sit there, and I try to picture myself at Jesus' feet. And that's it.

And you need this, too. Silence. Solitude. Time in the quiet, by yourself. This used to be built into our lives, but technology has corrupted that. In agrarian cultures, you used to get out in the fields, and just work. No earbuds. No podcasts. No books on tape. Just silence. Well, that day is gone, and now we have to fight to get this! But it's the first thing to get us postured at the feet of Jesus.

Number two, Scripture. You have to be in God's Word, on your own time, every day. Take a chapter, or even a verse or two, and just read them, and meditate on them. I do this each morning. I'm just reading through the Bible. Not necessarily what we're preaching through. But just reading God's Word. Hearing his words for me. If you have no idea where to start, take the Proverbs. Read once chapter each day. There's 31 Proverbs, there's your month. So, Silence, Scripture...

Number three, slowing down. Now this one is new for me, but hear me as a recovering Martha: I need to be reminded to slow down during my day, so I remember Jesus. If I don't remind myself, I will literally have my time in the morning, and then I'll find that I haven't even talked to God until Maryse and I pray before bed. I can get distracted. Anyone else? I need to remind myself to slow down.

I did this when I was a brand-new preacher. Notoriously, people who are new at public speaking tend to speak entirely too fast. They just get going, and don't stop. And so, when I started preaching at Fathom, for about 6 months, in every manuscript I would put, every three pages, in huge

bold font, the words SLOW DOWN! They were just there to remind me, to hold me accountable to what I wanted to do.

And so, I'm doing that in life now, too. So, I start my day with silence and scripture, and before bed I pray with Maryse, but twice during the day I have an alarm on my phone that buzzes. At 11:30 and at 4:30. And it just buzzes to remind me to pray, to slow down, to remember where I want to be: at Jesus' feet. That works for me right now. I don't know what it is for you. But I do think you should try to slow down throughout your day.

And then finally, Sabbath. Now, gosh, we're going to have to do sermons on all of these, sabbath specifically. But every week there should be 24 hours where you cease all work and are at rest in order to delight in God. Now, if this feels like a huge mountain, it is! Cause I'm not talking about simply a day off. For me, a day off is just time where I'm not participating in my vocational occupation. A day off can be spent in many ways, even some life-giving ways, but a day off can also be spent without anything being stirred in our hearts for the Lord. Now, a sabbath is a day of rest, focused on reconnecting with Jesus...sitting at his feet as it were.

So, here's what I can and can't do on my sabbath. I can get up early and drink coffee. I can play with Harper. I can mow my lawn. I can smoke my pipe. I can take a walk with Maryse. I can watch a movie. I can read a good book. I can take a nap. But, I can't have my phone on. I can't call you. I can't text you. Seriously, you try to get me on Saturday and I'll punch you in the neck. I can't be on social media. I can't work on a sermon. I can't read a book about ministry. You see, there are things that I can't do that will rob my sabbath day. So, I don't know what it is for you, but even if you do six days in a row with silence, scripture, and slowing down, you still need a 24-hour sabbath once a week.

Now, that is all insanely practical stuff, which I know I don't tend give you, but I think if you will start practicing these things, with the desire to posture yourself at the feet of Jesus, you have a very good chance of getting wet, as it were. But, one last thing to consider: why is it that we get to the place where we are Martha-ing ourselves to death? How do we get to the point, as followers of Christ, where we're distracted and troubled and anxious about all kinds of things? Well, I think it comes down to fear and shame.

I remember the night, more than 6-months ago, when the elders confronted me on plagiarizing portions of my sermons. I knew what I was doing. I knew I was outed. I knew I was wrong. And I confessed. And after that elder's meeting I called Maryse, as I always do, on my way home, and I can

vividly remember how much I didn't want to tell her what had happened. I didn't want her to know. But I knew I had to tell her, So, on the phone, driving home from church, I confessed to her. And after I told her, I confessed that I really didn't want to tell her any of it. And when she asked me why I didn't want to tell her, I said, "I was afraid. I am just so ashamed of myself. For getting here. For doing this. I should know better. I'm just so ashamed." And she said something that I'll never forget.

She said: "Chris, you never have to be ashamed to tell me anything." Another pastor friend of mine told me this. He said, transformation happens when shame collides with grace.<sup>vi</sup> The grace I experienced from her that night...the grace that I've experienced from you, my church...the immeasurable grace I've found at the feet of Jesus Christ. It's what transforms Martha's into Mary's. Martha, Martha, one thing is needed. Come to me. Bring your troubles. Bring your fears. Bring your pain. Bring your shame. Church, the posture of a disciple is rooted at the feet of Jesus, where shame is traded for grace...and sanctification occurs.

Let me ask you something: What is it that is distracting you? What is it that is causing you to be troubled and anxious? What is it that is pulling you away from the feet of your savior? Now, let me tell you something about our church: You bring it. You confess it. You lay it down. You drag it into the light. Is it sin? Is it pain? Is it fear? Is it shame? I'm gonna tell you what my wife told me: you never have to be ashamed to tell us anything. You will find grace. You will find transformation. You will find discipleship. You will find sanctification. You will find Jesus. To the Martha's in the room. The offer is on the table. Trade your sorrow for joy. Trade your trouble for rest. Trade your shame for grace. This is the sanctifying church.

Let's pray.

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<sup>i</sup> Adapted from Erwin McManus's sermon "It's All In You"

<sup>ii</sup> Peter Scazzerro

<sup>iii</sup> Adapted from J.D. Greear's sermon "Distinguishing Good and Bad Distractions"

<sup>iv</sup> Peter Scazzerro, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, p. 49

<sup>v</sup> From Matt Chandler's sermon "Under The Faucet"

<sup>vi</sup> From Gary McQuinn