

**White Noise**  
**Luke 10:38–42**  
**July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Welcome**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it;  
**for he has founded it on the seas,  
and established it on the rivers.**

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?  
**Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,  
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,  
and do not swear deceitfully.**

**Prayer of Adoration**

Loving God, we have gathered to meet you.  
We have come to listen to you,  
to seek you, to worship you.  
You are the beginning of all things,  
the life of all things; you knew us before we were born.  
In you we become; in you we live.  
Loving God, you are here and everywhere,  
around us and within us; you know our inmost thoughts.  
In you we hope; in you we live.  
You are the source of serenity,  
giving peace that is beyond our understanding.  
In you we are still; in you we live.  
Loving God, we live in you; we worship you.  
Loving God, you live in us; we worship you. Amen.

## **Opening Hymn   My Faith Looks Up To Thee**

My faith looks up to Thee  
Thou Lamb of Calvary  
Savior divine  
Now hear me while I pray  
Take all my guilt away  
O let me from this day  
Be wholly Thine

May Thy rich grace impart  
Strength to my fainting heart  
My zeal inspire  
As Thou hast died for me  
O may my love to Thee  
Pure warm and changeless be  
A living fire

While life's dark maze I tread  
And griefs around me spread  
Be Thou my guide  
Bid darkness turn to day  
Wipe sorrow's tears away  
Nor let me ever stray  
From Thee aside

When ends life's passing dream  
When death's cold threat'ning stream  
Shall o'er me roll  
Blest Savior then in love  
Fear and distrust remove  
O lift me safe above  
A ransomed soul

## **Call to Confession**

Let us confess our sin before God and one another.

## **Prayer of Confession**

**Holy and merciful God,  
in your presence we confess  
our sinfulness, our shortcomings,  
and our offenses against you.**

**You alone know how often we have sinned  
in wandering from your ways,  
in wasting your gifts,  
in forgetting your love.  
Have mercy on us, O Lord,  
for we are ashamed and sorry  
for all we have done to displease you.  
Forgive our sins,  
and help us to live in your light  
and walk in your ways,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news!  
The LORD is faithful in all his words,  
and gracious in all his deeds.  
The LORD upholds all who are falling,  
and raises up all who are bowed down.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.  
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Responsive Reading**

**Question 55. Are those who do not believe, then not chosen?**

Though we know that there are some who do not believe and who reject God,  
God's love continues to invite them to faith. God wills the salvation of all and  
excludes no one from the reach of his love.

1 Tim 2: 3-4, Jn 3:17-18, Rom 11:32

### **Prayer for illumination**

O gracious and holy God,  
give us diligence to seek you,

wisdom to perceive you,  
and patience to wait for you.  
Grant us, O God,  
a mind to meditate on you,  
eyes to behold you,  
ears to listen for your Word,  
a heart to love you,  
and a life to proclaim you,  
through the power of the Spirit  
of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### Scripture

#### **Luke 10:38-42**

<sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> 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." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

### **Children's Hymn      Shine Jesus Shine**

Lord the light of Your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness shining  
Jesus Light of the World shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth You now bring us  
Shine on me shine on me

Chorus  
Shine Jesus shine  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze Spirit blaze  
Set our hearts on fire  
Flow river flow  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth Your word  
Lord and let there be light

Lord I come to Your awesome presence  
From the shadows into Your radiance

By the blood I may enter Your brightness  
Search me try me consume all my darkness  
Shine on me shine on me

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness  
So our faces display Your likeness  
Ever changing from glory to glory  
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story  
Shine on me shine on me

### **Sermon**

As we have been learning over the past few weeks the path of discipleship in Christ is a difficult path to walk in life. It is filled with complexities, choices, and this desire to place Christ first in heart, soul, body, and mind. In the scripture today we see two followers of Christ: Martha and Mary. Two women who love Jesus, who worship him as Lord and who seek to serve him here on Earth, and each chooses a different way to serve the Lord.

What makes it interesting is the comparison between them, because it is in that comparison that we begin to understand the lesson on discipleship that we are being taught in the scripture. The reality of life is that it is very complex, we get pulled in so many directions.

There are so many things in the world which seem to require our attention, our effort, our time, our money, all of our resources. Anyone who has ever had a pet knows this, you have an animal that is dependent on you for food, cleaning, and care. Parents know it, kids require all forms of attention and care in their upbringing. Even if you have never had a child or a pet you still are kept insanely busy by life; there are bills to pay, things to be fixed, work to do, relationships to nurture, hobbies to pursue, and so many other aspects of life that overwhelm us each and every day.

This was all supposed to get better in the last one hundred years, people thought that computers were going to reduce our workload, now we work more than ever, cellphones would allow us the freedom to do things anywhere we want, but now calls from work catch us everywhere we go. Social media and the need to stay connected, to stay informed and informing dominates the lives of many youths today, they are quickly losing connection with the world around them and becoming lost in a virtual world. The more connected we get with the virtual world the more distracted we get from God.

The truth is that we never seem to have enough hours in our day, there is always something that we want to do that we are putting off in place of something which we feel is either more important or more urgent in our lives. We keep telling ourselves we would get that done, if we just had more time, just a few more hours in the day. Yet the

truth is that we always seem to find the time to do the things we want to do. We always seem to find the time to do what we feel is urgent, even if it means putting off something we know is important.

The problem we have in our lives is that often we will get so caught up in the urgent things that we do not see the relationship between the important things and the urgent things. It is usually when we ignore the important things that they become urgent things. When our car breaks down getting it repaired is an urgent matter, but when it breaks down because we did not maintain it, we have ignored the important and created the urgent in our lives. When we get sick, looking after our health becomes an urgent matter, but when it is caused by lack of sleep, improper diet or neglect we have ignored the important and created the urgent in our lives.

If we never learn to understand the difference between what is truly important and truly urgent, we will end up feeling always busy in our lives. running from one problem to another and never really finding time to do the things in our lives which are truly important. However, if we look after ourselves by choosing to do what is important in our lives, we can avoid causing things to become urgent.

That is what has happened with Martha, she has gotten herself caught up doing things that she feels are urgent. She has a home full of important house guests. The scripture tells us that **'Martha was distracted with much serving.'** She was busy running around doing all of the things that she felt were urgent to feed the guests, ensure they had water, ensure they were comfortable. She would be in the kitchen cooking food and then need to run and get more water from the well or one of the jugs nearby, then rush out to serve the food, but not look like she was rushing. She was trying to be the perfect host to her guests, but in doing so she was so focused on the hosting she had lost all focus on the more important aspect, her guests.

We have all been like this, busy, so busy looking after things that we feel are urgent that we miss something more important that is happening around us. We are busy doing what we feel is urgent and usually we get more and more frustrated with the people around us that are not helping, that do not feel that what we are doing is urgent. This is what is happening to Martha, she is hustling and bustling around the house and kitchen, trying to appear at ease and inside of her there is a growing frustration and anger with her sister Mary who should be helping her, but instead is just hanging out with the guests.

Martha is frustrated, she feels like no one appreciates her work, no one understands what she is doing, everyone just takes her for granted. At this point Martha loses her composure, she has had enough of Mary lazing around and wants her to get up and help her do what is in urgent need of being done in the kitchen. So, she looks to Jesus, the most important of the house guests and says to him **“Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.”**

Martha was caught up in her own service and it had become her focus, remember last week how we spoke about people getting caught up in religiousness and losing righteousness. Mary had gotten so caught up in the process of serving she had forgotten who it was she was serving. The Greek word that is translated into distracted by her preparations comes from the very “Perispao,” a word which means literally ‘to drag around in circles.’ She was busy, doing lots of hard work, but not really going anywhere with it, just dragging everything around in circles.

Jesus does not fault her for all of her service, instead he reminds her that her service needs to be centered not on what seems to be urgent, but on what is truly important. He knew that she was doing everything she was doing out her love for him, her devotion to him, He just wanted to remind her that she needed to remember him in all of her efforts to serve.

Jesus responds to her by saying, **“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,<sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”**

Martha was running on empty, she was frustrated, maybe even angry, feeling like she was carrying the world on her shoulders. She had so much left to do and needed help. Jesus looked at her, saw all of this, and told her that regardless of all of the things she had going on in her life at that precise moment, there was only one thing that was important.

How many of us are like this? We get so distracted by the things we have going on day to day that we are missing the important things. Last week I shared that 45% of people who say they are Christian attend church once a month. I am willing to wager that many of them claim it is because of something urgent or important, very much in the same way that Martha felt looking after the needs of Jesus and her other house guests was urgent and important.

We forget that we were created to live in fellowship with God. Adam and Eve had an unbroken and direct fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden and that was their purpose in life. We have the same purpose in our lives, God First, yet we get easily distracted from this by all the things we feel are important and urgent and forget the fellowship with God we are called to have.

Ken Jones, a pastoral counsellor, once spoke about a lesson he had on spending time in fellowship with God. He said that he had just moved into a new office and when he walked in, he saw a small device about the size of a dessert plate plugged into the outlet in his office that gave off this constant noise. The noise was not overly low, or very annoying, just a constant hum or buzz. He stood there for a while and stared at it, wondering what in the world it could possibly be.

Finally, he gave up and asked the receptionist. She told him that it was a white noise machine. It created an ambient noise in the office. She explained that because the offices were so quiet if someone were in a counselling session they could hear the voices, so to protect the privacy of the clients they bought the white noise generators, they covered up the voices.

The explanation made sense, after all protecting people's privacy in counselling was vital. However, he thought did not the noise need to be louder? The receptionist told him 'No, the constant noise tricks the ear so what is being said cannot be distinguished. He thought that was quite interesting, using one form of noise to cover another and it made him think and pray.

It was then that he realized that he strains to hear what God says, not because God speaks so little or so quietly, but because he has a constant background of white noise going on in his life, little noises – ambient fears, thoughts, and attitudes. Little tricks of the mind on what is more important, what is more urgent that distract him from slowing down and hearing the voice of God in his life.

God is not silent; we just have trouble hearing Him.

Like Martha we all have a white noise generator in our lives. We all have things which distract us from taking the time to sit at the feet and listen to Jesus. We have daily responsibilities, family duties, work, hobbies, a million things which distract us. These are all things which we need to do and enjoy doing in our lives. We do not need to stop doing them, we just need to think about the priority level we are placing on each of them. What priority should Jesus take in our lives, how important is our time with Him?

Mary had made the choice to spend time with Jesus. With any other house guest, she would have likely been in the kitchen helping Martha with food preparation and serving. This is probably why Martha is so frustrated! Mary was not doing what she usually did, instead she was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to him speak. Mary had placed relationship over service. She had chosen to listen to the Lord first. Righteousness, her relationship with God, over religiousness her service to the church.

This is what God wants from each of us, relationship first. He does not want us just running around in the world busy, he wants us in relationship with Him. When we are in relationship with Him, then our service to Him will be blessed and more fruitful.

We need to make the choice to be in relationship with Christ in our daily lives. We need to be like Mary and set aside the things we would normally be doing to spend time at the feet of Jesus, listening and learning. Spending time in prayer and scripture does not just suddenly happen in our daily lives, we need to make an effort to do it. We need to plan when, where, and how we are going to spend time with God. We need to place what is most important, Jesus Christ, first in our lives.



We all do this with other aspects of our lives. When we want to go on a vacation, we prioritize our work to get it all done by Friday morning so we can leave early! We give ourselves artificial deadlines, times we want to have things ready by, so that we can go and do the other things in life and avoid the stress of something important becoming something urgent. In school, I always told myself that my papers were due a week before they actually were. Even here I finish sermons on a Monday or Tuesday of each week, so that other things do not crowd in and interfere with doing what is important and make it urgent. A few weeks ago, when the power went out all day on a Saturday, I had friends reaching out to me to ask for help because they had left sermon research and writing until Saturday, and now suddenly they had no power, which meant they could not do their usual reading and research. What was important had suddenly become a very stressful urgent for them.

It also means knowing our limits in life. Knowing when we can say 'yes' and knowing when we should say 'no.' Too often in life we over commit to things. This is something that plagues churches. We have 10% of the people doing 90% of the work. People will say yes to everything and not be able to give anything 100%, because they will be distracted by the work, and worse yet, sometimes they may burnout. The 10% of people who take it on, usually think to themselves, 'it has to get done, no one else is doing it, so I will step up and do it, after all we need to do all we can do'. However, over time they can become like Martha, so tied up in the work of the church they are missing the real reason for it being there, Jesus. So, we all need to learn to say 'no' or at least 'not right now,' we need to learn to delay things, put off plans until a better time, when things allow for people to both maintain their relationship with God and serve His kingdom with His blessings. Placing the important over what we think may be urgent.

All of this can be accomplished by doing what matters most first, be with Jesus in our lives. Do not become distracted by the white noise of our to-do lists. Do not get distracted by work, or hobbies, or social pressures. Do not let our own doubts, thoughts, stresses, or anxieties take over in our lives crowding up our mind and filling it with that ambient noise. Do not put off the most important thing for things which seem more important or more urgent. Do not let your relationship with Jesus fall by the wayside. It is funny how it often takes a crisis in our lives before we come back to Jesus, people forget to pray when life is good, but the minute life is sour they return to prayer life. Jesus is always there, he is here with you today, right now, and he wants to spend time with each and every one of you, to love you, care for you, strengthen you. So, ask yourself are you too busy to spend some time with Him?

Paul knew the importance of a relationship with Jesus. He emphasized it over and over in his writing. He knew that Christ strengthened us when we are in relationship with him. Christ strengthens us in times of good and in times of trouble. It is Christ that gives us the power to accomplish His will here on earth, not our efforts and we can only do those things if we are in a relationship with him. Jesus is the one who will direct us. He will show us what to say yes to in our lives. He will show us how to invest our energy

and our resources. He will equip us with everything we need here on earth to accomplish his will, so that His power may be at work in us and through us.

Jesus was telling Martha to choose the important over the urgent. Choose Jesus first in all things, because the truth is that it is our relationship with Jesus that matters most. Seek God every day, good days, bad days, and every day in between seek God first and develop your relationship with Him. Mary had chosen correctly because unlike the things of the world, wealth, power, fame, and influence which can all be taken away, her relationship with Jesus is eternal and can never be taken from her.

If we are too busy in life trying to do all of the things, we feel are important and urgent we might be missing the call to do the things in life that God is asking us to do. When we slow down and spend time in relationship with Jesus, we will be strengthened by Him and able to do all of the things that He has put on our hearts to do both for Him and for others in this world.

Let us Pray,

**For Love of God and His Laws**

O most gracious God,  
every good and perfect gift comes from you.  
Work in us both to will and to act according to your will.  
Enlighten our minds that we may know you,  
and let us not be unfruitful in that knowledge.  
Lord, work in our hearts a true faith,  
a purifying hope, and an unfeigned love towards you.  
Give us a full trust in you, zeal for you,  
reverence of all things that relate to you.  
Make us fearful of offending you,  
thankful for your mercies,  
humble under your corrections,  
devout in your service,  
and sorrowful for our sins.  
Grant that in all things  
we may behave ourselves so as befits a creature to his Creator,  
a servant to his Lord.  
Make us diligent in all our duties,  
watchful against all temptations,  
pure and temperate and moderate in your most lawful enjoyments,  
that they may never become a snare to us.  
Help us, O Lord,  
to act towards our neighbor  
that we may never transgress your royal law  
of loving him as ourselves.

Finally, O Lord,  
sanctify us throughout,  
that our whole spirit, soul and body,  
may be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be all honor and glory forever.

*Source: Thomas à Kempis*

### **Invitation to Offering**

#### **Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3) We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. The email address for this purpose only is standrewspertthoffering@gmail.com If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Mission, Outreach, Fellowship) please mention this in your message.

#### **Offertory Prayer**

Praise be to you, LORD,  
the God of our father Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.  
Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power  
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,  
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.  
Yours, LORD, is the kingdom;  
you are exalted as head over all.  
Wealth and honor come from you;  
you are the ruler of all things.  
In your hands are strength and power  
to exalt and give strength to all.  
Now, our God, we give you thanks,  
and praise your glorious name. Amen.

#### **Closing Hymn    Blessed Assurance**

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine  
O what a foretaste of glory divine  
Heir of salvation purchase of God  
Born of His Spirit washed in His blood

## Chorus

This is my story this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long  
This is my story this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long

Perfect submission perfect delight  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy whispers of love

Perfect submission all is at rest  
I in my Savior am happy and blest  
Watching and waiting looking above  
Filled with His goodness lost in His love

## **Pastoral Prayer**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life,  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies  
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
by giving up ourselves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

## **Benediction**

May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.