‘Renewal through Prayer – Choosing the Better Part’

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Transcript

Luke 10: 38-42: **Jesus Visits Martha and Mary**

41 But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, 42 but few things are needed—indeed only one. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Most of us are familiar with the story of Martha and Mary.

Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus basking in the Lord’s presence, in quietness and trust, compared to Martha - hostess extraordinaire preoccupied with all that’s needed to prepare a feast fit for a King (quite literally).

In today’s busy age, most people can relate to Martha; I for one can.

Preoccupied, anxious and distracted by the numerous demands on our time, we do ‘God on the go’ – seemingly unable to spend quality time with Him.

In an ideal world, we’d probably all want to be like Mary- having ample time to sit at the Lord’s feet but our cluttered calendars don’t allow for this so we ‘practice the presence of God’ in the everyday (Brother Lawrence).

And though this is essential, there are times He calls us away for deeper, richer times of refreshing – to ‘choose to the better part’. It could be for an hour, a day, a week or a month – it doesn’t really matter how long, at the heart of it is the intentional commitment to cease all activity and be with Him.

I absolutely love going on retreats, particularly in places with beautiful natural surroundings for this very reason. In these spaces I have a greater

awareness of God's presence, taking in His beautiful creation – be it listening to bird song, observing sunrises & sunsets or breathing in clean, fresh air. On most of these occasions I have been on the brink of burn out, almost leaving it too late and therefore desperately needing to get away to be replenished and restored.

Over the summer, I went on a personal retreat to rural Norway – staying in a little cabin surrounded by forests, lakes and mountains in a remote area with little internet access, it was a touch of Heaven on earth. Days were spent in prayer, Bible reading, fellowship and worship – immersed in nature and also in the company of others at set times. By the end of the five days –my tightly wound-up body began to relax, my mind was clearer, and my heart unburdened.

Other times, our schedules and finances simply make it impossible for us to get away – but we can still 'choose the better part' by spending intentional time with God each day in prayer.

Most recently, at the height of my busiest work period, God told me to wake up at 5am to meet with Him and that each day He would reveal something fresh and new. Being naturally nocturnal and already working long hours, this seemed counterintuitive (much like the wisdom of God). But it was precisely because of thisb usyness, God wanted to realign my focus on the most important priority – spending time with Him.

By choosing 'the better part', God gave me more of Himself revealing more of Himself, His character, His Love…. And because our Father is so loving and generous, He even addressed *those* things that were on my extensive to do list – providing solutions, answering questions and much more which I couldn't have conjured up in my own human understanding.

Those early morning meetings became the GREATEST times of refreshing, meaning I was able to accomplish much more daily than had I continued to work ceaselessly.

By choosing the 'better part' – be it going away for a week or carving out time each day - by choosing to fix our gaze on Him, to listen to His voice, to

prioritise above all else – just be with him. He gives us of Himself, providing immeasurable refreshment for Body, Mind, Soul and Spirit – which will never be taken from us.

What would it look like for you to 'choose the better part'- given your current responsibilities and schedule?

Perhaps you just need to build in a rhythm of rest and pause into your daily routine. It could be practicing half an hour in stillness with your Bible – listening to soaking music and waiting to hear from God and to respond. Or it might be that you could take time out to prayer walk in the local park and just take time to listen to Him. Or perhaps you can find the resource and time to get away for a day or two or even a week to just intentionally be with Him. Whatever you do, I encourage you to 'choose the better part', because it will not be taken away from you.