

Rev. Janet Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
7th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, July 24, 2022
Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

Sermon: Overwhelmed

Over-worked. Over-stressed. Over-needed. Over-scheduled. We are expected to live a certain kind of lifestyle, own the right things and have it all together. At some point, it's just too much. We get overwhelmed by the things happening in our own lives and all the events and tragic situations happening around the world. How do we deal with everything and the demands of life and not get overwhelmed?

Last week we talked about the Christian life being like a marathon race in which we have to learn how to pace ourselves. As we run this race of life we have to not get overwhelmed as we run each day. We have to learn how to breathe and keep calm.

I have a coffee mug that says: **Keep Calm and Pray On.** We have to pray not to become overwhelmed. Many times, when you ask someone how they are, they respond by saying "Busy!" No one responds to "How are you?" with "I'm lazy! How are you?"

Being TOO busy is not good for us because it can take a physical, mental and spiritual toll on us. Sometimes when you say you are "busy," it means that you are needed, you have responsibility, and you like to get things done. We buy time-saving gadgets and don't have the time to read the instructions to figure out how to use them. We do "multitasking," especially in the car. We drive, eat, drink coffee, listen to the radio, and talk on the cell phone. We want to do more and more things in less and less time. It looks good to be busy. Someone once called it "Hyper living." There is a saying: "Jesus is coming; look busy!"

Maybe that's what fueled Martha's actions in our scripture lesson today. That was certainly Martha's approach because Jesus really was coming for dinner. I love this story of Martha and Mary. Jesus was bringing his disciples with him and probably it was short notice for Martha to prepare a meal for at least 14 people and she thought she was going to have Mary's help to prepare the meal. When Martha peeks out from

the kitchen wondering where Mary is and why she hasn't started helping her, there's Mary, sitting at Jesus' feet, which was the spot of learning exclusively reserved for men, like the disciples.

Can you understand Martha's reaction? Have you ever had that "Martha Reaction" when you were preparing a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, and no one was there to help you? You probably know what Martha felt like. So, Martha boldly approaches Jesus and states her case: "Lord, don't you care that I'm doing all the work by myself? Tell Mary to help me!"

Martha was overwhelmed and frustrated with her sister and with the work of preparing for the meal. She wanted everything to be perfect and just couldn't get it all done by herself.

Mary was doing what she thought best. She wanted to spend as much time with her Savior and Master. But Martha is also doing an important job. Martha is the patron saint of multitasking, and this world simply would not exist without her. Martha's in this world get the job done and we need our Martha's to keep the world turning. The Martha's are saying, "Who has time to sit still?" There are things to get done. Jesus is not criticizing Martha for being busy. He's not saying to her that such work doesn't have to be done, because it does. Someone has to do it. That is true. But the key is not getting overwhelmed with the tasks at hand and not getting overwhelmed with the sense of responsibility like Martha did. It is too easy these days with all we have been through and all we are still going through to get overwhelmed by life.

Sometimes we have to not be so concerned with the "doing" as much as the "being" and "being with others." Mary recognized the significance of Jesus' visit to her house, and she put her own agendas aside to make sure she spent time with him. The dishes would still be there after dinner; Jesus wouldn't. Jesus soon would be going to the cross and Mary had this understanding about her Savior.

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, did Martha regret that she didn't spend more time with Jesus that night? There are times in our lives that we are so caught up with getting things done and the tasks at hand that we don't spend time being with the people that we love and love us back. We are called to run this race of faith well, but there are times when we need to be refreshed in the presence of God and put things into

perspective. We cannot be overwhelmed with the things that may be able to wait. We are called to be both hearers and doers of the word. Martha was all “doing” and not “hearing,” and there are spiritual consequences for not taking time to be with Jesus.

Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still and know that I am God.” Being still in our crazy busy world today is difficult, and when we are feeling overwhelmed, it is necessary. It is important to let our soul rest. It is important to take time to read the Bible, listen to Christian music, and time to worship the Lord. You may only have time for 5 or 10 minutes of stillness today, but that is better than nothing.

What are you doing to relax when you feel overwhelmed by the tasks and demands of life and the news of the world? What are you doing to remind yourself that you are a loved child of God?

Jesus says, “There is need of only one thing.” What is the one thing? It is being connected with God. It involves slowing down, sitting still and listening to God’s still small voice.

Matthew 11:28-30 says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Jesus says, “You who are overwhelmed by life and your circumstances and demands...come to me.”

He says, “Come to me and let my power reassure you. Come to me and let my peace carry you. Come to me when you are going through a difficult time with your health, and I will give you strength. Come to me and turn your worries into faith. Come to me and find stability where you feel unstable. When you are awake at 2:00 am...Come to me. When you feel alone... Come to me and find companionship. Come to me when you feel angry and find peace and calm. Come to me and give me your burdens and leave them at the foot of the cross. Come to me when you feel weak, and I will give you strength. Come to me when you feel weary and tired, and I will give you strength.”

Only when you go to Jesus will you find rest for your soul and refreshment. Psalm 23 reminds us that “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside still waters, He restores my soul.”

Turn to God with your problems when you are feeling overwhelmed. In Psalm 142:1-3 David turned to God when he was hiding in a cave. The psalm says, "I cry out to the Lord; I plead for the Lord's mercy. I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles. When I am **OVERWHELMED**, you alone know the way I should turn." David also wrote Psalm 143 and in verse 10 it says, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing."

God is on our side, and as the Apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength."

When you are overwhelmed with cares and trials, keep in mind that you can do all things through Christ. Ask God for help, and be still before God, seeking guidance from your Savior and having faith that God will give you peace and rest when you are overwhelmed by life.

Remember our scripture lesson from last week, Hebrews 12:1-3, "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Do not grow weary or lose heart when you feel overwhelmed. Isaiah 40:31 tells us, "Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."

Come sit with your Savior and find refreshment and filling each day and you will have endurance for the journey and rest when you feel overwhelmed.

Do not lose heart and do not grow weary. It is only in knowing and following Jesus that you will find renewed strength for each day. Amen.