

The Time Barrier

Who Is My Neighbor series, part 2



³⁸Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But 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." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴²but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." Luke 10: 38-42

We start by viewing a video: <https://vimeo.com/117428368>

Who of us here would say that what the guy on that video said about too much to do and not enough time – that's you! That's your life? Your biggest challenge is time?

In the 1950's & 1960's people predicted that we would have more time-saving devices than ever before and so life today would be full of leisure. They predicted that the biggest question people living today would face would be: What do I do with all my extra time?

If in the 1970's someone would have told me that in 2021 I could make phone calls without being connected by a cord to a phone; and do it while driving in a car, or from the soccer field – I wouldn't have believed it. If someone told me in the 1970's that I would not need to go to the library to look information up in books called encyclopedias (remember those?) I would have thought that would open up hours of free time. If someone back then told me I could watch my favorite TV programs at any time of day or night I found most convenient, AND I could speed through the commercials – wow!

Today, the average person HAS all these time saving advantages – and more! And what's the result in your life? We are rushed! We have less time to do more than ever before. We don't have time! So when we hear we are to

love our neighbors – and we know that means spending TIME with them – we don't see HOW in the world we can!

One day Jesus went to the home of Martha and Mary. Martha seems to be the one who is most like us. She GETS it. Today we would praise Martha for her ability to multi-task. We'd say to her: "Martha, you are AMAZING! How do you DO it all?"

She was the one who saw what needed to be done and she flew into action. She anticipated there would be a need for a meal for their house-guests of Jesus and His followers, and she was busy making it happen.

Martha's sister, Mary, doesn't seem to get it. She's just sitting there. So when Martha appeals to Jesus to get Him to say something to Mary to get her going, Martha was stunned by Jesus' reply.

Jesus' words are sharp and pointed. They aren't mean-spirited words, or insulting. In love, Jesus stopped Martha in her tracks and had her re-evaluate her own priorities.

Jesus didn't condemn Martha's work. Is there anything wrong with hard work? (No). Is there anything wrong with being busy? -- to cross jobs completed off your "To Do" list? (No).

The man on the video a moment ago talked about – what do you put in your life FIRST? Like packing the car before going on vacation, you must put into your life what is most important FIRST, knowing that not everything is going to fit in and some things will be left behind. What goes in YOUR life FIRST, and can you be OK with what you leave behind -- the things that won't fit in?

Jesus raises with Martha the question of what goes in FIRST? **"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary."** There is ONE THING that should go in your life FIRST. There is ONE top priority. What is it that should go into our lives first? **"Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."** What Mary put in first is Jesus. She sat at His feet listening, soaking in His Word, spending time with Jesus. Mary put into her life FIRST to be about Jesus' purposes for her life.

We could put Jesus' point to us this way: **What's your priority? WORK or WORSHIP ?** BOTH work and worship are good. Both work and worship are gifts from God. But which one GOES IN FIRST in your life? Jesus is saying that worship is better. To be filled up with Him is better. To live for God and His purposes in my life, that's better. That's what really matters!

Friends, following Jesus is to be the top priority in our lives. Jesus said the Great Commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and

strength, and to love other people as much as you love yourself. This, Jesus said, is what gets put into our lives first.

Now, if I were to ask you to let me look through your calendar, and I looked at how you spent your time the last month, and what appointments and commitments you have coming up this week, what would that say about your priorities?

The way you spend your time reveals your priorities in life. Each one of us have one life. And every day we spend a little more of our lives. What are you spending your life on? You spend your life on what is most important to you. You spend your life on the things you put in first.

**Your priority arises from your PERSPECTIVE:
TEMPORARY or ETERNAL ?**

When it comes to loving your neighbor as you love yourself, the greatest barrier to us following through, is how we spend our time. To love your neighbor is more than just a feeling inside you. Love is always shown in concrete actions. And most of us say, "I just don't have enough time."

I find I have to remind myself that taking time for my neighbor is more important than keeping up the house. The lawn will need mowing again next week. A lawn is only temporary, like most of the things that we can spend our time doing. But my neighbor is eternal. His or her soul is eternal. He will live forever either in heaven, or in hell. I certainly don't want his eternity to be without God. And God gave the life of Jesus, gave up His Son, because God wants him to be in heaven forever.

It's so easy to get wrapped up in things like our jobs, our homes, our cars & campers & boats, our trips and hobbies, and to spend our time on enjoying ourselves. It's so easy to forget to focus our lives on those things that last.

Martha could only see before her things that are temporary. So spending her time on fixing a meal – as important and as good of a blessing it is to eat and enjoy a great meal – that's what she put in first, and she left out things eternal. Mary, however, was focused on eternal things – things that last.

God loves you so much that He wants, more than anything, you to be with Him in heaven forever. You don't *deserve* heaven. And there is NOTHING you can do to *earn* heaven by how good you live. So, God the Father gave Jesus, His Son. He paid for your sins with His own life on the cross. He rose again on Easter to guarantee there is life after the grave. And Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare a place for you. He's been busy for 2000 years getting heaven ready for you – that's going to be *SOME* great place!

Will this gift of heaven, will the truth that you are here only for a moment and you'll be in heaven forevermore – will you make this YOUR perspective?

Pray to God to change you to focus on heaven more and more and more. Pray to God that He will change your priorities – from spending your life on things temporary, to things eternal.

Your priority arises from your PERCEIVED NEED.

Sometimes I take my car into the mechanic for something small. I'm just taking it in for a routine oil change. Sometimes I do that, and my mechanic gives me a call when he's found something wrong that needs to be fixed. "Paul" he says "your brakes are worn out and it's really dangerous. If you don't get new brakes, you won't be able to stop and you'll cause an accident or worse." So I'll respond, "Is it on MY car? Or Sue's car?" (No! just kidding.)

A day earlier it wasn't even in my mind to spend money on those brakes. Now that I know I have a serious need, it becomes a priority and I'll definitely spend the money to get the problem fixed.

We spend time and money on what we believe we need. Some people spend lots of time at work. They are worried about building a nest egg for their future years. Their need is security.

Other people may make it a priority to volunteer in the community, at church, or become super room mother. There is something in them that needs to hear affirmation. There's something in them that needs to know that they are a good person. Maybe they don't get affirmation, or didn't get that from their parents growing up.

Other people try to become the super dad, super mom, or super employee because they fear having people upset with them. They try to please people. They need people to like them. They have a need for belonging or love inside of them that hasn't been met.

When what is most important to you is building your security, earning affirmation, or filling the love missing in your heart, you will spend your time filling that need. You won't love God or love your neighbor. You won't find time to do that.

When God brings you to faith in Christ, you become a new person. You are a new creation, the old has gone; the new has come. ***"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17*** Your security then is in heaven and no one can take it away. Your affirmation comes from God making you His son or daughter. You are a saint in His eyes, and more significant than you know. Your heart is filled with His great love for you.

Your life has already been filled with all you need. Your heart is at rest. And from this position of fullness, you can love your neighbor. You don't need

to spend your life trying to gain what God, by His sheer love, has already given to you. And so, you are set free to love others as you love yourself.

When concert tickets go on sale, people hurry to buy theirs before they are all gone. There is a mindset of scarcity. Scarcity is when you believe there might not be enough for me.

Sometimes people try to go through the food buffet line, to get some of their favorite food, before it's all gone.

We live our lives like that too. **Your priority arises from your FULLNESS or EMPTINESS? ABUNDANCE or SCARCITY?** If you don't think you have enough, your attention will be on yourself.

God has given you all you need. Sun and rain. Food and clothing. Home and family. Abilities, reason, your senses. This new day. And a life to be lived for Him.

God gives to you not reluctantly, and not in little tiny crumbs. He gives to you generously, and more than you can ever understand. You've been blessed more than you imagine. And God will do the same tomorrow and next month, and next year.

You haven't earned this. You don't deserve this. This, too, is God's grace.

And so, you see, **You are blessed with SALVATION, (heaven to come) NEW LIFE, (security and affirmation and love now in Christ) and GRACE, (all you need each day) **therefore LOVE GOD first and OTHERS as YOURSELF.****

Set your eyes on heaven. See your neighbor whose eternity could be changed if only you let God use you. If only you take the time.

Live out of your fullness of God's goodness to you. You don't have to rush through life to provide for yourself or prove yourself. Hurry and love are not compatible. You don't need to hurry when you've been blessed by God.

So, how will you make time to love your neighbor?

It all comes down to what - or who - goes in first.

When you live in God's grace, God will change you so that your priority is loving God and loving your neighbor.

AMEN.