

Making Room for God

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

October 18, 2026 - Week 3 of Sermon Series: *"A People Made Ready"*

Theme: "I AM MAKING ROOM." - One thing is needed.

Key Sentence: *Making room for God does not mean abandoning our responsibilities; it means allowing the presence of Christ to reorder everything else.*

Scripture Reading - Luke 10:38-42 (NRSVUE)

Introduction

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we are now in the third week of our October sermon series, "A People Made Ready." On the first Sunday we said, "I AM ROOTED." Christ is our foundation. Last Sunday we said, "I AM LISTENING." We prayed with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Today we take another step: "I AM MAKING ROOM."

Our Scripture takes us into the home of two sisters, Martha and Mary. Jesus comes to their house. Martha welcomes him and begins serving. Mary sits at Jesus' feet and listens. Soon Martha becomes frustrated, and Jesus gently says, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing."

This is an important word for us as Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas draw closer. Soon there will be more meals, more shopping, more programs, more family plans, more decorating, more traveling, and more demands on our attention. Many of those things are good. But before the busy season begins, Jesus asks us a simple question: "Is there still room for me?"

Today I would like us to reflect on three movements:

First, Good Things Can Still Distract Us

Second, Jesus Calls Us Back to the One Thing Needed

Third, Making Room for God Reorders Our Lives

The key sentence for today is this:

"Making room for God does not mean abandoning our responsibilities; it means allowing the presence of Christ to reorder everything else."

First, Good Things Can Still Distract Us

We need to be careful with Martha. She is not doing something sinful. She is serving. She has welcomed Jesus into her home. Hospitality mattered greatly, and somebody had to prepare the meal. The problem is not that Martha is working while Mary is spiritual.

Luke says Martha is "distracted by her many tasks." Jesus says she is "worried and distracted by many things." Notice the word many. Not necessarily bad things. Good things. Necessary things. Responsible things. But even good things can become so many that they crowd out the most important thing.

That can happen in church life. We can become busy preparing worship and forget to worship. We can become busy serving Christ and forget to spend time with Christ. We can organize ministry, attend meetings, care for details, and still discover that our own souls are tired.

The Guest Nobody Sat With

Imagine inviting an old friend to your home for dinner. You clean the house, prepare a beautiful meal, set the table, and make dessert. Your friend arrives, but the entire evening you remain in the kitchen - chopping, cooking, washing, and preparing.

Every few minutes you call out, "I am almost ready! Just one more thing!" Finally the meal is perfect. You walk into the living room and discover that it is already time for your friend to leave.

You prepared everything for your guest, but you never spent time with your guest. Sometimes our relationship with God can become like that. We say, 'Lord, look at everything I am doing for you.' And perhaps Jesus gently says, "But I also want you - your presence, your attention, your heart."

"It is possible to become so busy serving Christ that we leave little room simply to be with Christ."

Second, Jesus Calls Us Back to the One Thing Needed

Jesus says, "Martha, Martha..." I love that he repeats her name. It does not sound like angry condemnation. It sounds gentle, personal, and pastoral. Jesus sees more than her work; he sees what is happening inside her. She is worried, distracted, and probably tired.

Then Jesus says, "There is need of only one thing." Mary has chosen to sit at Jesus' feet. That was the posture of a disciple. With her body Mary is saying, 'Jesus, before I do something for you, I want to receive from you.'

There is a clear connection with our October journey. Week One: "I AM ROOTED." Week Two: "I AM LISTENING." But listening requires room. You cannot listen deeply when your mind is already filled with ten other conversations. You cannot receive when your hands are always full.

The Jar That Was Already Full

Imagine someone hands you a jar already filled to the top with small stones. Then they give you one beautiful larger stone and say, "Put this inside." You try, but there is no room. You move the smaller stones around. Still no room.

The problem is not that the large stone is too big. The jar is already full. Something must be rearranged. Some things may need to come out, and perhaps the most important thing needs to go in first.

Our lives can become like that jar: work, appointments, phones, errands, family responsibilities, church responsibilities, news, and entertainment. None of those things is necessarily wrong. But when we say, 'I want more time with God,' there seems to be no room.

Jesus does not always ask us to add one more spiritual activity to an already overcrowded life. Sometimes he asks us to rearrange what is already there.

"The question is not simply, 'How can I fit God into my life?' The deeper question is, 'How can my life be reordered around God?'"

Third, Making Room for God Reorders Our Lives

When Jesus says Mary has chosen the better part, he is not saying that work is unimportant. Jesus himself served, taught, traveled, healed, fed people, and carried responsibility. The Christian life is not an escape from ordinary duties.

Making room for God means that our activity begins flowing from our relationship with Christ instead of replacing it. There is a difference between serving because I am anxious and serving because Christ has filled me with love. There is a difference between thinking everything depends on me and faithfully doing what God has called me to do while trusting that God remains God.

Sometimes making room means saying yes - yes to prayer, Scripture, worship, rest, and people who need our attention. Sometimes making room also means saying no - no to another unnecessary commitment, no to constant notifications, and no to carrying responsibilities God never asked us to carry.

Preparing the Guest Room

Imagine family is coming to visit for Christmas. You have a guest room, but over the year it has slowly filled with boxes, old clothes, extra chairs, and things you kept saying you would deal with later. Then you receive a message: 'We will be there next week.'

Suddenly you look at the room differently. If someone is coming, you need to make room. So you begin sorting: this stays, this goes, this belongs somewhere else, this is no longer necessary.

You do not clear the room because you hate everything in it. You clear the room because someone you love is coming. That is a beautiful picture as we move toward Advent. Soon the church will proclaim again that Christ is coming. Perhaps October gives us an early spiritual question: What needs to be rearranged in my life so there is room for Christ?

"We make room for Christ not because everything else is worthless, but because Christ gives everything else its proper place."

Before Christmas Becomes Busy

There is something almost prophetic about this sermon in October. Soon Thanksgiving will come, then Advent, then Christmas. If we are not careful, we can celebrate the coming of Jesus while becoming too busy to spend time with Jesus.

We can decorate our homes for Christ, buy gifts in honor of Christ, prepare church programs about Christ, and sing songs about Christ - and still become like Martha, "worried and distracted by many things."

So imagine Jesus gently saying your name twice. Then hear him ask, "What is filling your heart right now? What is taking your attention? What are you carrying that you were never meant to carry? What has become so important that there is no room left simply to sit with me?"

A Practice for This Week

Our weekly practices are building on one another. Week One: "Jesus, root my life more deeply in you." Week Two: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." This week I invite you to pray:

"Jesus, show me what is crowding you out."

Then ask yourself two questions: What is one thing I can reduce this week? And what is one thing I can make more room for? Maybe less phone and more prayer. Less rushing and more silence. Less complaining and more gratitude. Less unnecessary busyness and more attention to someone you love.

You do not need to change your whole life in one week. Simply make one small space, and invite Christ into it.

Conclusion

Church, remember our October journey. First: "I AM ROOTED." Christ is my foundation. Then: "I AM LISTENING." Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. And today: "I AM MAKING ROOM." One thing is needed.

Remember our three pictures: the host who prepared everything but never sat with the guest; the jar that was already too full; and the guest room that had to be cleared because someone loved was coming.

All three ask us one question:

"Is there room?"

Room for Christ. Room for prayer. Room for God's Word. Room to listen. Room for another person. Room to receive.

Soon Advent will tell us, "Prepare the way of the Lord." Perhaps preparation begins today - not with decorations or Christmas programs, but by opening space within our hearts.

So church, let us say it together:

"I AM MAKING ROOM."

And what is our reminder?

"ONE THING IS NEEDED."

May God free us from the things that distract us. May Christ draw us again to his feet. May the Holy Spirit give us wisdom to know what to keep, what to release, and what to reorder. And may our lives become places where Christ is not merely welcomed at the door, but given the center.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reference Notes

1. The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, Luke 10:38-42.
2. Joel B. Green, The Gospel of Luke, New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, commentary on Luke 10:38-42.
3. Darrell L. Bock, Luke 9:51-24:53, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996, commentary on Luke 10:38-42.
4. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Book of Common Worship. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018, on the ministry of the Word, prayer, and Christian discipleship.