

**McCabe United Methodist Church**  
**R U a Martha or a Mary?**  
**Luke 10:38-42: July 20 & 21, 2013**  
**Pastor Rick Fossum**

What would you do if your bank credited your checking account with \$1,440 every day? That would be nice, right? But, there's just one small condition: whatever part of the \$1,440 you didn't spend each day would be lost. The bank would take back the unspent portion out of your account and it would be gone forever.

Ok, that's not likely to happen, is it? But we are given something that's just as valuable. Everyday, like clock-work, we're given something called '*time*'. Everyday, the good Lord credits your account and mine with 1,440 minutes. We can spend those minutes any way we want. There's just one small condition: the portion we don't spend well or wisely is lost forever. There are no carry overs.

So, how do you spend your 1,440 minutes? Some of us waste time. Some of us fritter time away. Some of us take our time. Some of us lose track of time. What do you do with your time? Do you treat your 1,440 minutes as a gift each day or do you take your minutes for granted?

Somebody once put it like this: *"Time is free, but it's priceless. You can't own it, but you can use it. You can't keep it, but you can spend it. Once you've lost it you can never get it back."*

Another person put it this way, *"Time is more valuable than money. You can get more money, but you can't get more time."*

Are you ready for one more? *"Most time is wasted, not in hours, but in minutes. A bucket with a small hole in the bottom gets just as empty as a bucket that is deliberately kicked over."*

Time is valuable. How we spend our time is important.

One day a customer walked into Ben Franklin's book store in Philadelphia. This happened a long time ago.

A sales clerk went to help him. The customer asked the clerk how much a certain book cost? The clerk looked at the price on the book and said, **"This book is one dollar, sir."**

The customer wanted to argue with the clerk about the price. **"How about fifty cents,"** he asked?

**“No,”** the clerk repeated. **“It’s a dollar and I can’t go any lower.”**

The customer realized that he was getting no where with the clerk and so he insisted on speaking with Ben Franklin himself.

Mr. Franklin was in the back of his store. He stopped what he was doing, walked over to the customer and asked, **“how can I help you?”**

The customer said, **"How much is this book?"**

Franklin replied, **"One dollar and twenty-five cents."**

The customer said, **"What? Your clerk just said it was a dollar."**

Franklin said, **"Yes, it was a dollar. But now you’re wasting my time."**

You see, even Ben Franklin knew the value of time. How we use it is important.

The truth is this: from the day we’re born to the day we die, 1,440 minutes gets credited to our account everyday whether we’re ready for them or not! We either use them well and wisely or we don’t. It’s up to us.

Which brings me to our story today from Luke. Martha and Mary were sisters and they were different from each other. They each had their own ideas about time.

One day Jesus and his disciples walked to Bethel where the two sisters lived together. Martha greeted Jesus and invited the whole crew to dinner. And then she remembered, **“Oh no! What have I done? Look at this house. It’s a mess. I don’t even have dinner ready! Heaven forbid! I’ve got to get busy!”**

Mary, the other sister, didn’t notice the house. She didn’t notice the cat hair on the chair or the dirty sock in the corner or yesterday’s dirty dishes still in the sink. She has her mind on other things.

Do you get the picture? Martha is running back and forth, from one job to another. She’s worried about the floors that need sweeping, the potatoes that need peeling and the table that needs to be set. Does Martha remind you of someone you know?

Poor Martha. The worst part for Martha was this: every time she runs past Jesus and the other guests, she sees Mary, her sister, sitting with them. They’re having a wonderful time laughing and smiling and visiting.

Finally, Martha's blood pressure boils over. She confronts Jesus and Mary and she complains, **"Jesus, this isn't fair! Here I am breaking my back trying to get things ready for you and here's my sister sitting at your feet like some puppy dog waiting to be scratched. Tell Mary to help me!"**

I hate to admit this, but I'm more like Martha than I am like Mary. I don't always use my time wisely. I think I miss too many opportunities where I could make better use of my time.

This is what the story of Martha and Mary is all about. It's about time. It's about how we use our time.

Now, I'm sure both Martha and Mary were good people. They both loved Jesus. They both wanted to follow him. They just had different ways of spending their time.

**"It's not fair,"** Martha complained to Jesus. **"I'm doing all the work."**

Jesus responded by saying, **"Martha, Martha, you're upset about many things, but only one thing is important and Mary knows what it is?"**

The story ends right here. Jesus leaves us with this question, **"What does Mary know that Martha doesn't know?"** Or better yet, **"What does Mary know that you and I don't know?"**

I think Jesus was saying something like this: *"My priorities aren't the same as yours. I'm not concerned about lace tablecloths and clean kitchens and great mashed potatoes. I'm concerned with your heart. I'm concerned about the time you spend with me and I'm concerned about the time you spend helping me make this world a better place."*

Billy Graham said the same thing only he put it this way: *"The greatest waste of all, which can't be recycled or reclaimed, is our waste of the time that God gives us each day."*

Martha used her minutes to clean house, cook and complain. I'm not saying cleaning and cooking aren't important. They are. What I am saying is this: she missed an important opportunity spend time with Jesus.

What about us? What portion of our 1,440 daily minutes are spent with Jesus? Do we spend some of our minutes in prayer? Do we spend some of them helping the people Jesus wants us to help . . . the poor, the lost, the lonely, the grieving, the rejected? Do we spend some of our minutes helping to make the Kingdom of God a

better place?

I don't think it wouldn't have killed Martha to put away the broom and apron for a couple of hours and serve peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to Jesus and his crew that day and spend some of her minutes sitting at the feet of Jesus listening and learning like her sister.

Time is our most valuable asset. How we spend our time makes an important difference in how we live our lives.