



“Martha, the Canaanite Woman and the Powerful Person – Type 8”

Theme: Beloved and Beautiful – Enneagram and Understanding

Weekly Memory Verse:

⁹ [God said to Paul], “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. – 2 Corinthians 12:9

Family Activity for the Week: This week, take a moment to think about the areas in your life where you feel weakest. Challenge yourself to not dwell on these, but begin to think of your weaknesses in a new light; how does God show Himself through my weaknesses? What ways does He give me strength in those moments? Can God bless me and others through areas where I am weak? Share these with your family members, and if you get stuck, I know someone else will be able to help you see a different way to think about them!

If you are not familiar with the Enneagram, you may want to check out the introduction workshop done by Pastor Aaron and Pastor Karen, or the books and articles found on this resource page <https://www.summitdurango.org/enneagram-resource-page/> for this sermon series. This week we are talking about type 8, known as the Powerful person. This is the first of the gut triad which includes 8, 9 and 1. There is a link to a simple inventory listed on the resource page which can help you discern your type.

Monday, September 7 – On this Labor Day, read Luke 10:38-42 which tells us about how hard Martha works and how the rest of Mary is needed by all of us. Jesus' friend Martha was very busy with good, sensible things! She wanted to be a good host, to offer her guest a good meal and restful lodging. We, too, often feel hurried and stressed, because we're trying to do too many good (not bad) things. In Jesus' day, to “sit at someone's feet” meant becoming that person's disciple. In this story, Martha did what the culture valued in women: cleaned the house and cooked the food. Mary did what the culture valued in men: she became a disciple or follower of Jesus.

- ▲ This story would have shocked many of Luke's readers. To listen at a rabbi's feet was for the rabbi's main followers—an honor their culture kept for men. They truly thought women's place was, “in the kitchen.” Jesus did not put down Martha's caring. He did say, “Mary has chosen the better part.” As you set your priorities, how can you put “listening to Jesus” above even mowing the lawn or increasing your 401K balance?
- ▲ Earlier in Luke's gospel, Jesus told a story about seed falling among thorns. In some lives, he said in Luke 8:14, God's seed is, “choked by the concerns, riches, and pleasures of life.” In what ways are the

(Message Notes and Meditation Moments for September 5-6, 2020 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org/)

current worries about coronavirus affecting your focus on deepening your walk with God? What other distractions at times choke out your desire to connect with God?

Prayer: God of the universe, it seems amazing that you want me to listen, “at your feet.” Give me a heart, eager to receive all the love and grace you wish to communicate to me through my work and rest. Amen.

Tuesday, September 8 – If you have time, read the whole story in [John 11](#). Jesus' friend Lazarus fell ill. However, Jesus did not arrive in Lazarus' hometown of Bethany until four days after his friend's death. The man's grieving sister Martha greeted Jesus with an “if only” type of statement. His answer began with the explosive words “I am”: “I am the resurrection and the life.” With that “I Am,” as scholar N. T. Wright noted, “He is challenging her, urging her, to exchange her ‘if only ...’ for an ‘if Jesus ...’.” If Jesus is who she is coming to believe he is ... If Jesus is the Messiah, the one who was promised by the prophets, the one who was to come into the world ... If he is God's own son, the one in whom the living God is strangely and newly present ... If he is resurrection-in-person, life-come-to-life ...”

- ▲ Martha and her sister Mary had “if-only” questions for Jesus—“if only” he had done things differently, they thought, things would be better. Jesus made seven “I am” statements in the gospel of John. His words to Martha are probably the most cherished of those statements: “I am the resurrection and the life... everyone who believes in me will never die.” Jesus has many ways of bringing good news, hope, and new possibilities into the mess and grief of life. He asks us for trust, as he did Martha and Mary. Often our “if-only” questions, like theirs, reflect our time-limited, earth-bound understanding. We face the question Jesus asked Martha: “Do you believe this?” How easy or hard do you find it to trust that Jesus is working for your good, even when what you wish would happen doesn't?
- ▲ In John 11:27, Martha replies confidently to Jesus' question with these words, “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” What can help you have that kind of confidence in today's shaky world? Can it help you to have that kind of faith in the coming days? Why or why not?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, sometimes it is hard for me to trust you amid my “if-only” questions. Thank you for offering me an eternal hope when I put my faith in you. Amen.

Wednesday, September 9 – Read Matthew 15:22-29 and Ephesians 4:4-5. The regions of Tyre and Sidon, or modern Lebanon, were Gentile territory, not Jewish. The disciples were no doubt nervously wondering “What are we doing here?” It appears that Jesus went there, at least in part, to teach them a lesson. His seemingly rude, nationalistic answers to the woman in need were like parodies of the disciples' biased attitude. But the woman cleverly pressed her case. Jesus affirmed her faith and honored her request for help.

- ▲ Written words can't show tone of voice or facial expression. If verses 24 and 26 were Jesus' true view of this desperate Canaanite mother, what he did in verse 28 didn't make sense. Might we understand the story better if we imagine Jesus with an ironic lilt in his voice, and a bit of a twinkle in his eye? Clearly, in the end, Jesus honored the mother's plea. How did his behavior rebuke and seek to change outlook the disciples' expressed in verse 23?
- ▲ Matthew's gospel seems to have spoken particularly to Christians of Jewish background, some of whom struggled to accept Gentiles (cf. [Acts 15:1-21](#)). How would this story have spoken to the ethnic, cultural and gender divisions the early church faced? How does it speak to today's divisions, such as between people trying to silence or “send away” victims of various types of abuse and those who demand justice for the victims?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you weren't about to let national or gender prejudice keep you from responding to this mother's heartfelt plea. Give me a willingness to do all I can to respond to pleas for help, even from beyond my comfort zone. Amen.

Thursday, September 10 – Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-30 and 12:7-10. Later in 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul honestly told his Christian friends of the many difficulties he faced as a traveling preacher. He related that he had prayed earnestly for God to remove a “thorn” in his body, an unspecified physical ailment. Whatever it was (perhaps poor eyesight), it clearly was a hindrance to his missionary travels. God did not take the ailment away. Yet Paul’s trust in God was such that he took that experience as a message from God, telling him, “my grace is enough for you.”

- ▲ Paul did not blame God for his ailment—he called it “a messenger from Satan,” not from God. He said he “pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me alone.” How good a case can you imagine Paul, who often traveled on foot, making for God to give him full health? Did having his physical struggle continue mean God didn’t care about him? Or was he right in seeing it as a further message about God’s grace at work in his life?
- ▲ Our culture, like the Roman and Greek cultures of Paul’s day, values being “strong.” We often define “strong” as “standing on your own two feet,” being tough enough to handle any problem. Yet scholar N. T. Wright called, “My grace is enough for you,” “one of the most comforting, healing, reassuring and steadying ‘words of the Lord’ ever recorded.” In what ways have you found that, “when I’m weak, then I’m strong,” and that relying on God’s grace makes you stronger than you could ever be on your own?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I’m not as invulnerable as I sometimes think I am. I’m grateful that your grace is with me even in times of struggle, and your power can work through the weakness I wish I didn’t have. Amen.*

Friday, September 11 – Read Psalm 126. This is an appropriate Psalm for 9/11. It also was known as a, “Prayer in the Spirit of Martha” in the early church. The background of this Psalm is that Israel’s long history included incredibly low times of misery at the hands of tyrants. We read about slavery in Egypt in [Exodus 1:8-11](#), and exile in Babylon in [2 Kings 24:13-14, 25:11](#). But it also included God’s action to deliver them in the Exodus and in the return from exile. Psalm 126 poetically recalled the joy they felt when God lifted them up from their lowly status and prayed trustingly that God would again allow them to live in the joy of divine deliverance. This is how Martha must have felt as she moved from the pit of grief over her brother Lazarus’ death, to the joy of his raising from the dead.

- ▲ The first half of this psalm was a journey in memory. The Israelites never forgot the Exodus from Egypt—their “defining story”—nor their jubilation when God set them free from exile. “Yes, the Lord has done great things for us,” the psalmist affirmed. God lifting them up from captivity was a permanent part of their history. What do you remember as a time when God did “great things” in your life? How do you keep that memory alive?
- ▲ The second half of the psalm became a prayer that the same God who did great things in the past would do them again. It used harvest language, picturing the ideal conditions for agricultural people. Are there parts of your life in which you want to ask God, “Let those who plant with tears reap the harvest with joyful shouts”?

Prayer: *Lord God, thank you for the times—like Jesus’ raising Lazarus—when you did great things for your people. Help me to live in the confidence that, sooner or later, you always act to lift us up and bring us joy, because you are the resurrection and the life. Amen.*

Saturday, September 12 – Read Micah 6:6-8. The prophet Micah lived at a time when Israel was practicing ceremonial religion and “conspicuous consumption” side-by-side. On God’s behalf, he urged a change of course. Pious rituals, he said, are no substitute for simply treating people justly. The apostle Paul said baptism identifies us, includes us in Jesus’ death. He carried on the metaphor—as Jesus was raised from the dead, so our baptism means that now we can, “walk in newness of life.”

- ▲ In what ways do your culture and community fall short of doing justice, embracing faithful love and walking humbly with God? Scholar Gary Smith wrote, “Micah’s delineation of God’s requirements is

(*Message Notes and Meditation Moments for September 5-6, 2020* – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

noteworthy insofar as it includes no negative statements about what is forbidden to the Israelites. It presents a positive case of what God thinks is best for humankind.” How can you actively move yourself, your family, your workplace and your community toward what God thinks is best for humans in not only words but in actions?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, my goal is to walk humbly with you. Lead and guide me into the newness of life that you died and rose again to offer me. Amen.*