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 St. Stephen's Church (Sewickley, PA)
 17-18 July 2010 – Pentecost 8/Trinity 7/Proper 11
 Text: Luke 10.38-42
 Series: Lessons from Luke: Invited Into the Kingdom
 Title: "Christianity, Sean Connery Style"

Luke 10:38-42 Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; ⁴² one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

1. Intro

- a. Anyone here have a busy week?
 - i. *New Yorker* cartoon: "How about never? Is never good for you?"
 - ii. We're all so busy!
 - iii. We are always on the go, always working, always trying to make our lives fit what they're supposed to be, trying harder to get thinner, trying to make our marriages perfect, trying to make our kids perfect, trying to find that job, that partner, that pie in the sky.
 1. (Now, some people aren't doing this, but they know they're supposed to. They're in active rebellion against it. Colorado is full of people who grew up on the East Coast, working really hard and not working hard.)
 2. But most of us are "Trying Harder."
 - iv. This is what I call "Life, MacGyver Style."
 1. Remember *MacGyver*? 90s TV series. (Picture) MacGyver was always getting caught trapped in these situations, and he'd get out using household objects.
 - a. "The bomb will blow in 40 seconds! All I need is duct tape, Q tips, and a Chihuahua!"
 2. In life, in the MacGyver approach, you've got some problem, and so you frantically looking around to find what you can use to fix it. Many Christians adapt this: "MacGyver Christianity." Jesus becomes another

tool in your toolbox in your frantic, desperate attempts to fix all the problems in your life. And it's exhausting.

- b. An antidote to that is what I call "Christianity, Sean Connery Style."
 - i. No, I'm not talking about 007—Much to your disappointment, I'm sure, Christianity has nothing to do with tuxedos and cars that launch missiles.
 - ii. I'm talking about a scene in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, where Connery plays the role of Indiana Jones' father.
 - 1. They are imprisoned in a room in a castle. Indiana Jones is running around, trying to fix the problem. And Connery says that when faced with a problem, "I find that if I just sit down and think, a solution presents itself." He sits, leans back, and his chair activates a lever that opens a trapdoor to a stairway out.
 - 2. This scene is example of two approaches to life: an aggressive, active one, versus a passive one.
- c. In our passage this evening/morning from Luke's gospel, we see this contrast (active vs. passive) in a big way, as it relates to the Christian life.

2. Segue

- a. We're continuing through Luke's Gospel. Now "Invited into the Kingdom." Constantly in the Gospels, Jesus is talking about the kingdom of God.
- b. It means "the reign of God." You can think of it like this: What the world looks like when God is in charge. God's way of doing things.
- c. Jesus is always saying "The kingdom of God is like..." And then he uses parables to illustrate it.
- d. And in this series, we're taking a look at the kingdom, what it's like, and what God's kingdom, his way of doing things, says about our way of doing things.
 - i. First, Geoff talked about God and Country
 - ii. Then God and Our Neighbor
 - iii. Now, today, God and our Projects—But I liked my title better so I went with it.
- e. Our passage from Luke 10 today gives us an illustration of the kingdom, and it specifically addresses the two approaches to life (and faith) that I mentioned in the beginning: active (MacGyver) vs. passive (Connery). And it says something for us.

3. **Passage: First, lets re-cap the story**

- a. Two sisters. Jesus enters. Martha, whose home it is, and Mary. Martha, whose last name, I think, is Stewart, is busy getting ready. She's a great host. Or at least a busy one.
 - i. You know how when you have a big family meal, there is always one person who just can't sit down? They're always running back to the kitchen to get the butter, or someone forgot the napkins. And they're sort of obsessed with the dinner being perfect? That's Martha.
 - 1. I actually found a picture of her. (Slide showing Martha Stewart)
- b. Martha in the passage is described this way:
 - i. "distracted with much serving."
 - ii. "anxious and troubled"
- c. Mary, however, while all this is going on, is doing this:
 - i. "[Mary] sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching"
 - 1. She's just sitting and listening!
 - 2. By the way, this would be a radical role for a woman in Jesus' time, to be a rabbi's disciple. Jesus is a radical, people!
- d. Martha's response: she is indignant: Don't you see how hard I'm working? Don't you care? Tell Mary to help!
- e. Jesus' reply: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; ⁴² one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41)

4. **Main Point(s)**

- a. **We see here the two approaches to life: The Active "Try Harder" (or MacGyver) approach and the Passive (Sean Connery) approach.**
- b. **Which one are you?**
- c. **The kind of life you live—MacGyver/Martha or Connery/Mary—it's going to affect two big things in your life:**
 - i. First: how you answer the question: Who's in charge?
 - 1. The Active Approach: You're in charge.
 - a. Everything is up to you. If you don't do it, it won't get done.

- b. Jesus becomes one of the things you try to use to get the world to work the way you want it to:
 - i. Martha to Jesus: “and she went to him and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.’”
 - ii. You go to your pastor and say, “My child is doing things I don’t approve of; would you meet with him or her and get her to stop?”
 - iii. Or you figure out what you want (house, job, money, love interest, college), and then you ask Jesus for it.
 - iv. Tracy Flick in Election: “Dear Lord Jesus, I do not often speak with you and ask for things, but now, I really must insist that you help me win the election tomorrow because I deserve it and Paul Metzler doesn’t, as you well know. I realize that it was your divine hand that disqualified Tammy Metzler and now I’m asking that you go that one last mile and make sure to put me in office where I belong so that I may carry out your will on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.”
 - c. The result of this lifestyle for you, like Martha, is distraction and anxiety. You don’t sleep well. And people can’t, in general, get close to you.
2. The Passive Approach: Jesus is in charge.
- a. Mary takes this position of humility, sitting at Jesus’ feet, and has an attitude of dependence.
 - i. She “Listened.” This means she knew she didn’t know everything. And she needed to learn from someone who did.
 - b. What she did actually looks like not doing anything.
- ii. The second thing that’s affected by whether you’re MacGyver or Connery is this: Your attitude about Fairness:
- 1. The Active Approach: All about fairness. All about doing what’s right and getting rewarded for it.

- a. Martha is following the customs of her day for hospitality. She's doing the RIGHT thing! Important to get this!
- b. And this attitude has her checking on other people: I'm doing my part, and you better be too.
- c. She's upset that Mary gets to spend time with Jesus and she hasn't done anything to help! It's not fair. Martha's having a bit of a tantrum.
 - i. 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.'
 - ii. What an unbelievable thing to say to Jesus.
- d. If you're in the Active Approach to life, I guarantee you, you are exceedingly aware of your own progress, that of your children and your spouse, and how they measure up to everyone else. And if you're like this, and you're a Christian, you're probably asking Jesus, like Martha did, to make other people more like you. Because it's all about fairness—you do what's right, you follow the rules, and you get rewarded.

2. The Passive Approach: Not about fairness. It's about grace.

- a. Mary gets the good stuff. And she doesn't deserve it. She didn't help Martha in the kitchen.
 - i. And because she seems to have this humility, she's able to receive Jesus' words, again which are grace—he gives to those who don't deserve it.
- b. It's not fair. Actually, it wasn't fair that Jesus came to their house. I mean, he could have gone to dozens of other homes in that town. Maybe others "deserved" it more. Yet Jesus came to them. Not fair.
- c. Just like Jesus has come to you. Not fair. You didn't earn it.
- d. And he offers you grace. Not fair. You should get what's coming to you! But Jesus offers mercy. Fairness is out the window.
- e. This is what is infuriating and so wonderful about Christianity—Jesus comes to sinners and gives them grace.

- i. When people crucify him, he says “Forgive them.” It’s not fair.
- ii. And when he dies on the cross, giving up his perfect life FOR YOU, it’s not fair.
- iii. And praise God that it’s not. Otherwise I would be lost.

5. Conclusion:

- a. What have I said:
 - i. Active vs. Passive (MacGyver vs. Connery). Which one are you? Your answer affects two things in your life:
 - 1. How you answer the question, Who’s in Charge? Active says You Are! Passive says God is.
 - a. And if you’re in charge, it means anxiety and distraction.
 - 2. Fairness: Active says it’s all about doing right and then getting your fair reward. Passive says it’s about getting it all wrong, and then receiving God’s grace. This is deeply offensive, but it’s the Gospel.
 - ii. In closing I want to make a point of clarification and then just give an example of what this Passive Christian life looks like.
- b. Point of clarification:
 - i. Passivity doesn’t mean you don’t do anything. I’m not advocating that you get a bucket of KFC and watch Oprah and reruns of *Everybody Loves Raymond* every day. After all, Jesus, when he goes to Martha’s house, he had just finished telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, and he ends with a call to action: “Go and do likewise!”
 - ii. Scripture tells us to do lots of things. Yet in this passage today, the one who is doing lots things, and SERVING JESUS, is rebuked!
 - iii. How do we make sense of this?
 - 1. More of an art than an exact science.
 - 2. The kind of Christian passivity I’m talking about is an attitude of the heart.

3. Christian action is born out of the fact that we know God loves and accepts us. Your belovedness is a given. So you don't need to do anything to get God to like you.
4. Action rooted in RESTING in God's love, but it can look very active.

6. Illustration/Implication

- a. Let me illustrate what this looks like.
- b. One my vacation last week. Should have been great. Our kids were with the grandparents. We were just going to have a relaxed week. Do some projects around the house, go on hikes, explore parts of Pittsburgh.
- c. And every night I was sleeping horribly. I would wake up with my jaw hurting, because I was clenching my jaw all night.
- d. Why? I was worried about going back to work. Love my job, but I knew I had a busy week ahead of me, lots of stuff to get done.
- e. And I got right into my MacGyver mode. That place where success is all up to me. It's all on my shoulders ("My life is so hard, but gosh am I important!")
- f. So after about 3 nights of this, I got up, sat down on the couch and started praying.
- g. See all my problems, like boulders in my arms. And I'm tired. And I start handing them to Jesus. He takes them all.
- h. And suddenly, he starts to grow. And he's so big, the boulders are like pebbles to him.
- i. And he puts them in his pocket. And he smiles and walks off.
- j. And you know, this week, I've done a lot of stuff, all the things I had to do. But It's been a good week. And when the anxiety creeps back in, when I'm getting back into MacGyver mode, I pray, "Hey Jesus, got any room left in your pockets?"
 - i. And he always does.