

Module : Gathering**Session 3** : Gathered and Positioned to Hear - Part 3**Focus** : Response to the Enemy's GatheringWord to the World
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Continued directly from Session 2

PRINCIPLE 22: A PARALLEL SATANIC GATHERING PROCESS IS FOCUSED UPON OPPOSING THE PURPOSES OF GOD AND EVERY SPIRITUAL BENEFIT ATTENDANT WITH THE GATHERING OF SONS OF GOD

There is a concerted satanic agenda designed to prohibit the gathering of the sons of God. Also, within the domain of the enemy, he gathers with the greatest of ease those he uses to oppose the purposes of God. On the one hand, the enemy is opposed to the declaration and hearing of God's Word within the context of an assembled community of the sons of God under the sound of the voice of their spiritual father. He will oppose every spiritual benefit associated with, and that arises out from the gathering of the saints. Thus he will try everything in his power to discourage saints from regularly gathering together. On the other hand, he is focused on intensifying the principle and process of 'gathering' within his own ranks amongst those he would use on the earth to further his intentions.

Satan is Aware of the Power of Gathering:

The enemy's strength and confidence in opposing divine purpose is based upon his capacity to gather in oneness. Note the quickness and ease with which the enemy gathers to oppose Divine purpose.

Example 1:

Mat 22:34-35

- 34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, **they gathered themselves together.**
- 35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question, testing Him,*

The enemy gains confidence to approach Jesus to test him because they harness courage and strength in their own process of gathering. The enemy's capacity to oppose divine purpose is given impetus and strength by virtue of a consolidation within their own ranks through gathering. This lawyer is bold because his question is not really launched from him per se, but from a context of a united front of gathered Pharisees.

From the context of accurate gathering, we can act or speak singularly, but with the amplified and authoritative voice of a corporate supportive community. Individual actions and declarations are given the effect of a corporate thrust and effect. This principle is exemplified in Peter, 'STANDING UP WITH THE OTHER ELEVEN APOSTLES', on the day of Pentecost, explaining the events of his time.

Acts 2:14 But Peter, **TAKING HIS STAND WITH THE ELEVEN**, raised his voice and declared to them: Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

See also: **Acts 5:29** But Peter **AND THE APOSTLES** answered, We must obey God rather than men.

Example 2:

Gathering gives people spiritual leverage and corporate strength – either for evil or good intent. Absalom launched his attack against his father David. From Hebron - a physical environment denoting a spiritual principle, which denotes alliance, joining, confederacy, etc. Absalom used a biblical principle for evil motives. See 2 **Samuel 15:1-12**.

Example 3:

Matt. 2:1-4

- 1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **Herod** the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,
- 2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."
- 3 When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
- 4 **Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people**, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

Herod has the capacity to gather the religious order of his day, yet today, spiritual leaders fail to gather around authentic apostles with authentic spiritual authority. Herod means 'hero'. Many people who oppose an authentic move of God or true doctrine, want to appear 'heroic' in the eyes of their following and they exhibit great ease in gathering people together to support their evil agenda.

Acts 4:26 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE **GATHERED TOGETHER** AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'

There is a strong Holy Spirit initiated process of unity and oneness afoot. Contraflow to this is a satanically induced scattering process. The deliberate surge ahead for gathering in unity as one must be more powerful and forceful than the conscious attempts of the enemy to instigate a disesteem for oneness. The momentum of gathering as 'one man' must be stronger than the plot to scatter. Scattering erodes the power of our corporate one-ness.

Example 4:

Judges 6:33-34

- 33 Then all the **Midianites and the Amalekites** and the sons of the east **assembled themselves**; and they crossed over and camped in the valley of Jezreel.
- 34 So the **Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon**; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were **called together** to **follow him**.

The enemy gathers, showing remarkable willingness and ability to set aside cultural differences to unite against God's purposes vested within Gideon. Commonality of objective unites even people and groups who are intrinsically opposed to each other. If a nation is under the threat of war, internal differences between cultural, racial, ethnic, language, social and political groups seemingly lose their power to divide as the nation unites as one to face a common threat to them all. Within the domain of Satan amongst the many and varied groupings of peoples he uses to oppose divine purpose, they easily set aside apparent differences and divisions to combine against God's purposes (see also Joshua 9:1,2 quoted below). We, the church, are ONE BODY organised in different groupings. We, above all people, should display effortless ability to rally together whenever the call is made or the need arises.

Gideon simply sounds a trumpet – symbolic of an intense/urgent prophetic summoning and the response was immediate from the Abiezrites.

Abiezrites = Father of Helps or My Father will help.

The Abiezrites represent a 'fathering' grace. Our fathering call and responsibility is what will give us victory against satanically planned onslaughts designed to erode our gathering capacity. Our commitment to representing the Heavenly Father in His fullness in the earth (and this has many implications) is our strength and protection against the enemy's allied attack.

Example 5:

Josh 9:1,2

- 1 Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, **the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite**, heard of it,
- 2 that **they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua** and with **Israel**.

The enemy will always vehemently oppose any God-initiated gathering process on any level to hear His Word. The opposition intensifies at more strategic levels of gatherings.

Example 6:

Psalms 35:15 But **at my stumbling** they rejoiced and **gathered themselves together**; The smiters whom I did not know gathered together against me, They slandered me without ceasing.

Notice here that the enemies of David gather at his stumbling. This gathering is initiated at the fall of someone else. This is the wrong motivation for gathering. The enemy consolidates his gathering process at the demise or failure of sons of God – to further entrench it. The opposite is true in the kingdom of God. Our gatherings are redemptive in its focus and objective whenever a brother falls. We must keep the motivation for gathering, at whatever level, pure and honourable.

PRINCIPLE 23 : NON-COMMITMENT TO GATHER EQUATES TO SCATTERING

Mat 12:22-31

- 22 Then a demon-possessed man *who was* blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.
- 23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"
- 24 But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."
- 25 And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "**Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.**
- 26 "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?
- 27 "If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? For this reason they will be your judges.
- 28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- 29 "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong *man*? And then he will plunder his house.
- 30 "**He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.**
- 31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

Scatter = skorpizo = to *dissipate*, that is, (figuratively) *put to flight*, *waste* – to disperse abroad.

Jesus highlights the tragedy of a kingdom, city or house divided against itself - It will not stand. He uses this argument in response to an accusation against Him that He was casting out demons by the authority of Beelzebub, ruler of demons. He argues that Satan is not divided against himself, and thus He (Jesus) cannot be operating by the power of Beelzebub, but by the Spirit of God. By implication, Jesus is suggesting that Satan will not oppose his own plans and agenda – he will only seek to scatter and dilute God's initiatives and purposes.

The rulers falsely perceive Jesus as securing spiritual results through demonic means. They attributed to Satan what was a work of the Spirit. Jesus then states, that He who is not with Him was against Him, and he who does not gather with Him, is actually scattering.

Every house divided against itself will not stand. Corporate power and strength is diluted through division in a house. Not gathering unto Jesus equates being committed to scattering – and weakening His purposes attendant with gathering.

Matt 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

He who does not gather, scatters. There is no neutral ground on this issue. A non-commitment and spiritual indifference to the gathering of and with the saints equates to a subconscious and tacit support of the 'scattering' intent of the enemy. We have to endeavour to keep unity - being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace – Eph. 4:3.

Matt 12:30

- MSG:** "This is war, and there is no neutral ground. If you're not on my side, you're the enemy; if you're not helping, you're making things worse.
- BBE :** Whoever is not with me is against me; and he who does not take part with me in getting people together, is driving them away.
- CEV:** If you are not on my side, you are against me. If you don't gather in the harvest with me, you scatter it.
- ERV:** Whoever is not with me is against me. And anyone who does not work with me is working against me.
- NLT:** "Anyone who isn't with Me opposes Me, and anyone who isn't working with Me is actually working against Me.

Those who scatter and are divisive are devoid of the Spirit of God.

Jude 1:19 These are the ones **who cause divisions**, worldly-minded, **devoid of the Spirit**.

A Four-Fold Response to Satanic Scattering:

The enemy knows the spiritual advantage of gathering and thus seeks to scatter. Scattering is a satanic reaction to the spiritual initiative of gathering.

Nahum 2:1,2

- 1 **The one who scatters** has come up against you. **Man the fortress, watch the road; Strengthen your back, summon all your strength.**
- 2 For the LORD will **restore the splendor of Jacob** Like the splendor of Israel, Even **though devastators have devastated them And destroyed their vine branches.**

Note here that our response to a satanically engineered scattering plan is four-fold. These four responses also highlight the blessings and benefits of gathering that satan seeks to neutralise. They are (1) Man the Fortress; (2) Watch the Road; (3) Strengthen Your Back; (4) Summon All Your Strength:

1. MAN THE FORTRESS

Man = naṭsar = 'to guard'; 'to protect, maintain, and obey'.

Fortress' = a hemming'.



'Fortress' alludes to consolidating and reinforcing something. Fortress walls keep the enemy out. These represent principles of **OBEDIENCE** that keep us immune and protected from the enemy's attack. They speak of sharpened obedience. We consolidate our gathering by heightened obedience to known biblical principles.

'Man' also implies that everyone **be faithfully functional** within their specific roles within the Body of Christ. There is

to be neither vacation nor desertion of your function. There should be no breaking of rank either.

Other versions of Scripture frame this command as follows:

Keep the munition (kjv);

Guard your fortresses (cev);

Man the ramparts (esv);

Keep the bulwark (ylt).

‘Manning the Fortress’ is our reaction to the enemy’s scattering intent, but also, is an activity that is fostered and facilitated within the context of regular gatherings with the household of faith.

2. WATCH THE ROAD

‘Watch’ = tsaphah = ‘to lean forward, that is, to peer into the distance; by implication to observe, await’.

Road = derek = to a course of life or mode of action, moral character or direction.

‘Watch the road’ implies that we give more greater analysis/audit and keener introspection to our lifestyles. These should be Christlike and reflective of Kingdom culture. Also implied is that we prophetically foresee the path and specific direction ahead of us as we journey in our destiny in God.

Remember that a satanic scattering process need not manifest only in the literal physical disassembling of an intended gathering. A gathering could well be assembled, yet scattered, because in the gathering some have given the enemy tactic entry by their ungodly lifestyles or by the pursuit of an inaccurate emphasis or objective (path).

‘Watching the road’ is our reaction to the enemy’s scattering intent, but also, is a disposition that is developed from the process of regular gatherings with the household of faith.



3. STRENGTHEN YOUR BACK

Strengthen = chazaq = to *fasten upon*; hence to *seize, be strong, courageous*

Back = mothen = to *be slender*; properly the *waist* or small of the back; only in plural the *loins*

A strong back and waist in the natural is vitally important. Much of the movements of the upper and lower body depend on a strong mid-riff. Courage, strength and resilience is needed. The opposite of this is discouragement, weakness and resignation from a Divine mandate. Our inner resolve to be courageous and strong is our reaction to the enemy’s scattering intent, but also, strength and courage are benefits that accrue from the process of gathering also.

The Hebrew word for 'back' also denotes 'loins', which allude to **reproductive capacity**. This refers to the birthing of sons in the image of Christ. Hence the instruction here is to strengthen and re-enforce our capacity to produce sons of God in the image God. In the face of an enemy threat to scatter, we simply focus of the producing and perfecting of sonship.

Thus, 'strengthening our back' as represented in its interpretation as a capacity to produce mature sonship, is our reaction to the enemy's scattering intent, but also, is a capacity that is harnessed and activated only within the context of regular gatherings in a household of faith, where the principle of one-ness and conjugal relationships (HEBRON) persist. [Recall that sons were born to David at Hebron – 2 Sam. 3:2].



Other versions of Scripture frame this command as follows:

Make thy loins strong (kjv); Dress for Battle (esv); Gird your loins (nrsv);
Strengthen your flanks (nkjv); Brace yourselves (niv).

4. SUMMON ALL YOUR STRENGTH

Summon = 'āmats = *to be alert, confirm, be courageous to be stout, strong, bold, alert.*



This calls for conscious and deliberate mustering up of one's courage and strength. Our strength is private but more so corporate. There is great strength derived from the corporate expression of the Body of Christ. The word 'summon' suggests vigilance and alertness that engenders boldness. This is a deliberate activity. It must be done consciously and not left to mere chance or coincidence. Summon your strength!

Other versions of Scripture frame this command as follows:

Marshall your strength (niv); Fortify your power (nkjv); Collect your strength (esv); Prepare for Battle (cev).

Our inner resolve to 'summon our strength' is our reaction to the enemy's scattering intent, but also, occurs within the gathering of God's people.

NOTE: In each case above, the reaction to the enemy's scattering plans are actually simply to reinforce the principle of gathering. Please remember that the gathering's main focus is the declaration and hearing of the WORD OF GOD. The fourfold responses and dispositions above are all natural outflows of a Word-centred culture.

all twelve baskets were then gathered together. The new wine is in the cluster. This is the 'one loaf' apostolic company that will bring finalisation to all of God's purposes.

CONCLUSION :

There are preventives to gathering hinted at in our study over the past two sessions. As we conclude I want to stress the danger of isolation and busyness also.

PRINCIPLE 26: ISOLATION – OUT OF THE RANGE OF GOD'S SPEAKING – IS DANGEROUS

Judges 18 highlights the danger of isolation, even though you are strong. Read the entire chapter slowly and meditatively before reading the notes below.

Judges 18:27-28

Then they took what Micah had made and the priest who had belonged to him, and **came to Laish**, to a people **quiet and secure**, and struck them with the **edge of the sword**; and they **burned the city** with fire. And there was **no one to deliver them**, because it was **far from Sidon** and they had **no dealings with anyone**, and it was in the **valley which is near Beth-rehob**. And they rebuilt the city and lived in it.

The people of Laish were **quiet and secure**. They were a 'quiet' people, i.e. peaceful and at rest. They were also 'secure', i.e. **confident and trusting in their strength**, and were in no threat of danger or attack – or at least they thought so.

The singular factor that made these people vulnerable was their ISOLATION – they had no dealings with anyone. They were killed entirely as a people because of their inability and unwillingness to relate to and connect with others.

They were far from Sidon and although they lived in the culture of the Sidonians (Jer. 18:7), yet they were not in practical or active relationship with them. In the time of the attack, they were too far to receive help, because they 'distanced' themselves. Even though we may all have the same culture of the kingdom, we must still relate in close proximity to other members of the Body of Christ. This must be so lest, in a day when we are under personal attack of some kind, we suffer loss because we are too 'far' removed relationally from the source of help, i.e. ZION. 'Zion', among other things, refers to the corporate strength and power of the Body of Christ.

Psalms 20:2 May he send you **help** from the sanctuary and give you **support from Zion**.

Laish = old lion. This indicates that these people had a sense of experience and strength and thus a false sense of security.

Their city was near Beth-rehob which means “House of breadth; region of wideness; house of the broad way”. They lived in broadness and largeness, but in a valley which was low lying and thus a vulnerable position. Enlargement and growth must not lead to a compromise of your spiritual welfare. Also, do not seek expansion at the expense of relationships, for although largeness and increase can be attained, it is pointless if God-ordained relationships are destroyed along the way.

No matter how at rest you are, how strong you are, how experienced you are, or how enlarged and broad your ministry influence and sphere is, you still NEED others and must not succumb to a spirit of independence and isolation. Otherwise there will be ‘no-one to deliver you’ in your hour of need.

Let us not stand aloof and apart from each other. We need each other more than we ever realise. Let us prioritise our gathering together. This is God’s ordained way to strengthen us.

Don’t be ‘TOO FAR’ from me; I must not to be ‘TOO FAR’ from you.

Isolation from regular gatherings of the saints of God also makes one prone to error and self-deception.

Prov. 18:1

NASB He who separates himself seeks *his own desire*, He quarrels against all sound wisdom.

AMP He who willfully separates and estranges himself [*from God and man*] seeks his own desire and pretext to break out against all wise and sound judgment.

BBE He who keeps himself separate for his private purpose goes against all good sense.

There is always safety and protection in the context of the gathering of the sons of God.

Prov. 11:14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but *in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*.

In a season in which his soul was cast down, partly because of isolation – away from God’s gathered people, the Psalmist recollects times of joy and fullness associated with the ‘throng’ or assembly of the sons of God:

Psalms 42:4 These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me, How I went with *the throng*, and led *them to the house of God*, With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.

Psalms 122:1 I was *GLAD* when *they* said to me, *Let us go to the house of the Lord*.

Zechariah 8:21

The gathering of sons of God together is of vital importance as it creates a specific Kingdom culture. Nations will be attracted to this culture (Micah 4 / Isaiah 2). Note in the verse, there is the encouragement of a group in one city to another group in a different city to seek the favour of the Lord. This is not abstract pursuit of God, but involved the physical gathering together at a place (this place was Jerusalem for them - Zion). The latter part says, "I myself AM GOING" - implying a literal movement to a predetermined place. One cannot encourage others to gather, unless you yourself are 'GOING' to gather too.

PRINCIPLE 27: EXCESSIVE ACTIVITY, ANXIETY AND WORRY CAN BE A DISTRACTION FROM HEARING GOD'S WORD AT THE FEET OF THE ONE SENT TO SPEAK GOD'S WORD TO YOU

Luke 10:38-42

- Martha welcomes Jesus into her home and immediately starts to make preparations in her bid serve Him. This, by natural standards, is in accordance with sound hospitality, yet the disapproval of her actions by Jesus calls us to interpret the activities within the house from a spiritual perspective. Jesus commends Mary's action of sitting and listening to the Word.

Note:

- The HOME here is symbolic of a 'household' - a church.
- Jesus is welcomed into the house. The presence of God is in the House of God.
- Mary immediately focuses on correctly positioning herself to hear His Word. The priority of the House of God is the Word of God.
- The seeming multiplicity of essential preparations Martha was preoccupied with was in Jesus's view, a 'worry and distraction' and actually 'not necessary' at that point in time.
- Mary chose to engage in the act and posture of 'hearing and obeying' the Word of God, something that is not temporal in nature and which will never be extracted from her spiritual experience and relationship with God.

Both the Hebrew and Greek words translated 'house' (bayith and oikos respectively) allude to the quality of relationships that exists in the house.

MARY SAT AT HIS FEET TO HEAR HIS WORD.

We must position ourselves in our private and personal times of devotion before Lord as we study His Word. But the important phrase to note in this passage is 'his feet' – it has a prophetic application in that sitting at His feet also has reference to positioning ourselves under the sound of spiritual fathers who declare the word of God unto us.

Something we taught in [Session 7](#) of this series, '[The Primacy of God's Word](#)', merits repetition here:

Your spiritual father must be current with the present demand and proceeding Word of the Lord – or at least be connected to an apostolic fathering source that is. This is vital because if you are fathered by someone who is not au fait with the current speaking or emphasis of God through His word, you could find yourself, your mindset, activities, etc., obsolete and irrelevant.

Rom 10:15 *How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"*

Beautiful = horaiois = *belonging to the right hour or season (timely), that is, (by implication) flourishing (beauteous [figuratively]): - beautiful.*

The Greek term 'horaiois' is associated with one of the Greek terms for time, viz. 'kairos', which means 'an opportune time in which certain constituted events determined by God must take place'. So 'haraiois' bears reference to that which is 'timely' or a relevant functionality that is reflective of God's emphasis within a certain time period.

Those bearing good news through the preaching of the Word of the Lord must have beautiful feet. As the definition of the Greek word 'horaiois' above indicates, this word carries three ideas:

- The word 'beautiful' denotes 'flourishing' – hence – 'productive'. It bears fruit in the lives of the hearers in tandem with the expectation of God for that season.*

- b. *The word is a timely and relevant word – a current word.*
- c. *This word that brings momentum and forward movement (implied by 'feet') to the purposes of God.*

MARTHA WAS INACCURATELY POISED

Martha reveals potential threats and hindrances to people gathering to position themselves to listen to God's Word.

a. Martha was Distracted by Excessive Serving

Martha was engaged in acts of service with reference to Jesus – she was serving Him - a picture of WORK or ministry for the Lord. Serving Jesus had to be done, but the caution that Jesus gives relates to the fact that her 'much serving' of Him had actually become a distraction to her. The expression and focused determination we sometimes have to doing God's will within the domain that He has called us to function in can at times itself be the greatest distractor to actually prioritising times of gathering with saints, to listen and engage the spoken Word of God.

Martha's work for Jesus was not borne out of intimacy attained through waiting on Him in worshipful devotion, listening to His Word. This is the 'one thing' that we cannot do without. How often do we not neglect our sitting at His feet to hear His Word. Our 'preparations' for service for the Lord must be a natural outflow and consequence of maintaining a life of intimacy, devotion and love for the Lord – and all these are consequences of one's prioritisation of positioning oneself to hear His Word.

b. Martha was both Worried and Troubled by Many Things.

Worried	= merimnaō	=	to be anxious; to be troubled with cares
Bothered/troubled	= turbazō	=	to <i>make</i> "turbid", that is, to <i>disturb</i> ; to be troubled in mind, disquieted

Related Greek words akin to 'turbazo' above is 'thorubeo' and 'turbe' – which describes the effect of disturbance by a crowd in uproar. Here are implications of the feelings of danger and anxiety associated with the threat on one's welfare and life. Such was the feeling Martha had within her mind over the many things she attended to. Her motivation seemed that if the multitude of things were left undone, that her welfare and wellbeing would be compromised. She lost the value of being positioned at Jesus feet to hear His Word. Today we position ourselves together with others in a corporate community at the beautiful feet of the one who carries good news – sent to speak to us the Word of God (see Rom 10:15). Many are overindulgent in the affairs that seek to monopolise their time and energy and they feel that they have to give attention to these, lest their welfare and wellbeing lacks. But the reality is that finding the time to sit at HIS feet is absolutely essential for effectiveness in of all life. You live by the BREAD of the Word – by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

The word 'turbid', which characterized Martha's mental state, indicates a confused and disordered state of mind. Anxiety and excessive care causes this. Anxiety and the cares of this life (literally, 'the worry of this age') is something Jesus said would choke the Word so that is unfruitful – Matthew 13:22. We must deal with anxiety and excessive worry. These are serious hindrances to hearing the Word of God effectively so that it will produce fruit.

Consider the following for encouragement in dealing with this:

Phil.4:6,7 **Be anxious for nothing**, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will **guard your hearts and your minds** in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:7 **casting all your anxiety on Him**, because He cares for you

c. Martha Became Disoriented

Jesus actually said that Martha was ‘distracted’ (nasb) or ‘cumbered’ (kjv) by all her preparations.

Cumbered = perispoo = to draw different ways at the same time; no clear direction; no sense as to what you are doing and where you are going; to draw away the mind (mental drift); to be distracted by cares and responsibilities; to be overburdened by various distractions; to be over occupied with a thing; to be driven mentally; to busy oneself.

The emphasis of this word ‘cumbered’ is not the volume or multitude of work as much as it is mental drift and distractions. There is a clamour for the attention of our minds in our daily lives. This is the true spiritual warfare. To quiet one’s inner mind and deliberately fixate one’s thought to that which God is saying is a discipline that must be restored to the Body of Christ. WE give fleeting attention to HIS WORDS and yet expect significant results in our lives. The Word of God is the sobering principle in and of our lives. It keeps us focused and oriented as to what the will of the Lord is.

CHOOSE THE BETTER PART!

Mary **sat and heard** Jesus’s word while Martha was /distracted cumbered.

Sat = **parakathizo** = to position oneself near to another.

This is not a literal sitting down position but deep association, proximity, narrowing the distance between herself and Jesus.

Heard = **‘akouoo’** = to yield obedience to the voice; to understand and perceive the sense of what is being said; to attend to , consider what is said.

What Mary was subconsciously saying is, “I have heard, now I must take action”. When you hear, you deliberately design an obedient action. Many are tickled by concepts they hear, but there is no deliberate obedient action – no appropriate response. Every time the Word is sounded – it must be obeyed.

Jesus said, 'One thing is needful and Mary has chosen the better part. This better part is to gather to position yourself at the feet of the one who proclaims the Word to you. This is what is 'needful' - to quiet the soul, position yourself with close proximity to hear, learn and understand. Mary **CHOSE this part**. Positioning oneself to hear His Word is a conscious and deliberate choice – it does not just happen per chance. Neglect it, and you will never do it. Fail to actually plan to do it, and it will certainly go unattended and unnoticed, and soon its value becomes diminished and then you start to deem it unnecessary.

David said, ...

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord And to meditate (literally 'inquire') in His temple.

David was complex – his hands were full of responsibility – totally occupied. In the midst of all of this, he expresses his ONE NEEDFUL thing. This one thing made him to be successful in all of his roles – the need to be in the House of God and make INQUIRY. Do not lose your impartational quality. Remain on the cutting edge, consistently positioning yourself under the sound of His voice.

Strive and learn to permanently position yourself within His will, to fix your gaze upon His nature and to engage in forensic examination of His will/intent. This is the one thing that David sought after. THIS principle is to be practiced privately in terms of your daily personal devotion and also publicly by meeting with other sons of God under the sound of one's spiritual father, who through the release of the Word reveals God's beauty (character) and will (which provide answers to our 'inquiry').

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR PERSONAL REVIEW AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. From your study of this session and the previous two, collate a list of potential prohibitions to an authentic Christ-like gathering process.
2. How does satan oppose gatherings of the sons of God?
3. A satanically induced scattering process work to weaken a Divinely initiated gathering process. Discuss the statement, citing a few scriptural examples.
4. What is the fourfold response to the scattering endeavour of the enemy according to Nahum 2:1? What exactly does each one mean?
5. How does an intense and focused building priority in the House of God outweigh and outpace an attempt to destroy and to break by the enemy?
6. Highlight some dangers and errors that one is prone to if he/she isolates him/herself from gathering together with other sons of God to hear God's Word.
7. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word. How do we practice this today? What is the modern day contemporary expression or counterpart of this?
8. Martha exhibits three tendencies that pose an obstacle to positioning oneself under the sound of the speaking of God through one's spiritual father. What are these and how exactly do they hinder you?
9. Have you chosen the 'good part'? (Luke 10:42)

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