

# Frustrated Pt. 2

Pastor James Foley – Shared on Sunday, December 10, 2023

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## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING 2023

The 2023 ABM will take place on Sunday, January 21, 2024, following service (January 28 in case of poor weather). Nomination forms necessary to nominate individuals for the elected office of Deacon on our Board shall again be distributed to the membership following service today. Completed forms must be placed in the designated box on the front foyer table by no later than next Sunday, December 17. Ministry Leader Reports are due on Sunday, December 31.

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us. Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a rather short space of time.

### SETTING THE STAGE

**NOTE 1** – Last week we noted that every earthly relationship has its share of frustrations. No matter how much you love your spouse, children, family, church family, friends and beyond, at some point they will drive you mad! At varying points you will have to navigate the irritation, annoyance, disappointment, offense and frustration that is part and parcel of any and every relationship. How many here again attest to the validity of my remarks?

**Q. May I make—or remake—a difficult statement?**

**NOTE 2** – This is also true of being in relationship with Christ. No matter how much you love and are committed to the Lord—He who created and redeemed you—at some point both He and His ways will drive you a bit mad! At varying points you will have to navigate the irritation, annoyance, disappointment, offense and frustration that is part and parcel of a relationship with Christ. How many here can attest to the validity of my statements?

**NOTE 3** – Last week I noted two sources of frustration: **a)** the hardness of Jesus' call; and **b)** unmet expectations. Please feel free to review the notes online at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org). This morning I intend to share three additional sources. Thus said, please have your Bible open and pen and paper ready. We have much to discuss!

### MISALIGNED PRIORITIES

Firstly, we may become frustrated with Christ Jesus when our sense of priority differs from His sense of priority.

**NOTE 1** – How many start to serve Him well, impassioned and even excited about being His disciple or follower, yet somewhere along the way they stumble when that which is urgent to them is seemingly not urgent to Him?

**Q1. How many have been offended at the Lord due to a misaligned sense of priority?**

**Q2. Have you ever been flustered by Christ when His purposes vary greatly from yours?**

**NOTE 2** – If so, you are not alone! In fact, allow me to show you a biblical account that exemplifies my point(s):

**Luke 10:38–42 (NIV)**

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made [ESV – "distracted with much serving"]. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

**Q. What do we see in this Lucan selection regarding Martha?**

**A.** We see she is frustrated w/ Christ due to misaligned priorities.

**NOTE 3** – Martha was clearly preoccupied with the many preparations that had to be made in order to host Jesus. Her priority was on *much* serving (40b, ESV italics mine), as she rolled up her sleeves in order to get to work. There is no doubt she was excited to open up her home to the Messiah, as He was becoming a prolific figure, and she wanted everything to be just right! Jesus was her guest and it was her task to ensure fitting hospitality.

**NOTE 4** – In many ways I laud her. In many regards, the world would be better if it had more Martha's at work! After all, we are seeing what a nation of physical and spiritual sluggards will create when there is work to do! Thus, we cannot overly fault Martha in the moment, for in many regards she had sought to do a wonderful thing.

**NOTE 5** – Yet the priority of Christ in the moment was not earthly food, but spiritual food (i.e., eternal truths). Whereas Martha was so focused upon setting the table for the Lord, she did not have the wherewithal to realize the banquet He had set for her and for all in her home. She let her sense of priority trump His, breeding offense in a "two-fold" direction: **a)** offense at her sister in the Lord; and **b)** offense at Christ for failing to offer remedy:

**Luke 10:40b (Emphasis Mine)**

40 . . . She came to him and asked, "**Lord**, don't you care that my **sister** has left me to do the work by myself? **Tell her to help me!**"

**NOTE 6** – As was addressed last week, the Lord is not going to augment and adjust His priorities to suit our own!

**Q. What was the reply of Christ to Martha (i.e., dear, sweet Martha)?****Luke 10:41**

41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

**NOTE 7** – These words were intended to remind Martha of what truly mattered in the moment (Jesus' desire). We do not know what transpired next. Did Martha temporarily set aside the cooking and cleaning to take a seat at the feet of Jesus beside her sister, Mary (i.e., setting aside her frustration in the moment for Jesus' invitation? It would be lovely to believe so, but Scripture does not paint the picture of what occurred following His words!

**NOTE 8** – What I do know is this story compels us to realize that Jesus' priorities will often differ from our own. Amidst life and living you will have to choose between your desire(s) in the moment or the desires of the Lord. I remind you that choosing poorly leads to frustration, anxiety and loss of intimacy! Choosing rightly yields peace.

CHOOSE YE WISELY!

## MISALIGNED PRIORITIES AND TOXIC INFLUENCES

Let us now consider another selection featuring Mary which both features and expands upon similar sentiments:

**NOTE 1** – Three of the Gospels present a poignant scene from the life of Christ (i.e., in proximity to His death): **a)** Matt. 26:6–13; **b)** Mark 14:3–9; and **c)** John 12:1–8. I would like to consider elements of each account. Note:

### **Matthew 26:6b–7**

6 . . . when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table.

**NOTE 2** – The Gospel of John adds a few details worthy of note. Firstly, this event happened about one week before the Crucifixion (12:1). Secondly, Jesus was attending a celebratory dinner following the raising of Lazarus, served by Martha (vs. 1–2). Thirdly, the woman who poured the perfume was Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus (v. 3). Fourthly, John provides additional details concerning this moment of true worship. Consider the following:

### **John 12:3**

3 Mary . . . took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

**NOTE 3** – What a fitting response following the raising of Lazarus. How might you have responded in the moment?

**Q1. What was the response of the disciples who witnessed the worship of One so worthy?**

**Q2. How did those who witnessed this touching moment and the resurrection of Lazarus react?**

### **Matthew 26:8–9 (Emphasis Mine)**

8 And when the **disciples** saw it, they were **indignant**, saying, “Why this waste? 9 For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.”

### **Mark 14:4b–5 (Emphasis Mine)**

4 . . . some who said to themselves **indignantly**, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? 5 For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii [i.e., three hundred days of a laborer’s wage] and given to the poor.” And they scolded her.

**Q. What was the response of Christ to these offended followers?**

### **Matthew 26:10–13 (Mark 14:6–8)**

10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. 11 For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. 12 In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. 13 Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

**Q. What do we see herein?**

**A.** Disciples who are frustrated concerning Christ and His ways due to a sense of mismatched priority or purpose. Whereas He happily received the wondrous, timeless, timely and costly worship of a dear woman and servant, His disciples were agitated that such waste would be tolerated. How could such extravagance be excused when such money might be used to achieve such good in the earth? They deemed themselves “justifiably” frustrated!

**NOTE 4** – What a tragedy that those closest to Jesus viewed His worship as a waste. I can only wonder how often they chided themselves following the death and resurrection of our Lord for such a misplaced sense of priority (i.e., wishing that they had joined Mary in worshipping Christ v. rebuking her in ignorance). Missed opportunity! Be wary of misaligned priorities in life and living. You may be missing great things of God when your goals clash.

**KEY** – Thus said, the Gospel of John adds interesting details and a “secondary source” of potential offense. Note:

**John 12:1–6 (Emphasis Mine)**

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But **Judas Iscariot**, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

**Q. Did you catch how this account differs from Matthew and Mark?**

**NOTE 5** – Whereas Matthew and Mark present an angered band of disciples (i.e., plurality), John notes Judas. How are we to reconcile these perceived differences? It would seem that Judas, whose desires and priority differed from those of Christ, proved toxic to the group. Thus, one who was offended by the Lord catalyzed offense in the hearts of others. Is it not amazing how quickly we seek to build alliances against others when we are angered? Such is even the case with the Lord. When we deem ourselves wronged by Him, we seek to declare such injustice to others. The loudest voices against the faith are those who feel wronged by it (e.g., “atheists”).

**QUOTE** – “If friends will not walk in the narrow way with us, we must not walk in the broad way to please them. Health is not infectious but disease is.” –J. C. Ryle

**NOTE 6** – Be wary of toxic voices. A great many who feel aggrieved by Christ will seek to make their pain yours. There is always a Judas Iscariot waiting to whisper into your ear regarding the injustice of God and His ways are. If it could influence unsuspecting figures like Peter, James and John, do not believe such cannot negatively you! When confronted with such voices, you will have to choose between heeding their voice or the voice of Christ!

CHOOSE YE WISELY!

## **DIFFERING TIMELINES**

Thirdly, we may become frustrated with Christ Jesus when His timing differs from our own (i.e., seemingly late).

**NOTE 1** – How many start to serve Him well, impassioned and even excited about being His disciple or follower, yet somewhere along the way they stumble because He fails to operate in the manner and time we anticipated.

**Q1. How many have been offended at the Lord due to matters of punctuality?**

**Q2. Have you ever been flustered by Christ when His arrival seems rather “late”?**

**NOTE 2** – If so, you are not alone! In fact, allow me to show you a biblical account that exemplifies my point(s):

**John 11:1–3**

1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.”

**Q. What was the expectation of Mary and Martha in this moment?**

**A.** That Jesus, their friend, would drop everything at once to come for Lazarus.

**Q. Yet what was the response of Christ to the report(s) of the illness of dear Lazarus?****John 11:4 (Emphasis Mine)**

4 But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” 5 Now Jesus **loved** Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he **stayed two days longer in the place where he was**. 7 **Then after this he said** to the disciples, “**Let us go to Judea** again.”

**NOTE 3** – V. 5 is intriguing. Christ loved them so much He delayed! What a bizarre and seemingly contrary text!

**Q. What happened upon the arrival of Jesus? Did He make it in time to help Lazarus (friend and one He loved)?****John 11:17–19 (Emphasis Mine)**

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “**Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died**. 22 **But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you**.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “**Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world**.”

**Q1. Can you not feel the frustration of Martha herein? (v. 21)****Q2. Are you not impressed by her willingness to trust? (vs. 22, 27)****Q. What of Mary?**

**A.** She is equally flustered.

**John 11:28, 32 (Emphasis Mine)**

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” . . . 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “**Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died**.”

**NOTE 4** – It can be a difficult thing to trust the timing of the Lord. Many fail in such moments and abandon Him. Yet to those who are willing to trust—when it is seemingly impossible and all hope is lost—faith yet avails. Consider that the timing of Christ (i.e., perceived lateness) worked to set the stage for His supernatural working!

**Q. Could it be that His love caused the delay (v. 5) so they could witness the following?**

**John 11:33–44**

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?" 38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

**KEY** – Those who wait upon the Lord shall find renewed strength, and shall see the hand of God in myriad ways!

**NOTE 5** – How many start to serve Him well, impassioned and even excited about being His disciple or follower, yet somewhere along the way they stumble because He fails to operate in the manner and time we anticipated. In such moments you will be compelled to choose between trusting in Christ or succumbing to bitter frustration.

CHOOSE YE WISELY!

## SUMMATIONS

**NOTE** – No matter how much you love and are committed to the Lord, at some point He and His ways will offend. At varying points along the journey of life you will have to navigate irritation, annoyance, disappointment, frustration and more (i.e., if you are going to be His for time and eternity). Perhaps your frustration will center upon a difficult teaching of Christ (e.g., disciples of John 6) or upon some unmet expectations (e.g., John the B.), perhaps it will center upon some mismatched priority, toxic influence or the perceived "lateness" of the Lord, forcing you to choose between trusting the Lord or regressing in your relationship with Him. CHOOSE YE WISELY!

**KEY** – Connection with Jesus Christ is by no means easy, yet it is worth it. Everything comes at a cost. Willingness?

## CONCLUSION

**NOTE 1** – Feel free to give either in person or online at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org).

**NOTE 2** – Check out our website for any of our beyond Sunday ministries (MM, WM & CYC).

**NOTE 3** – I would direct all members in good standing to see our Secretary for Nomination Forms re: the ABM.

**2 Corinthians 13:14**

14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.