

One thing needful

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[0 : 00] which we read, the Gospel of Luke, chapter 10, and we shall read again the last verse of the chapter, verse 42.

But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Martha, Martha, thou art cumbered about, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

We often praise the good housewife, diligent and hardworking. And such a person deserves to be praised.

And where would some of us be but for good housewives who look after us so well? But here you notice that Jesus praises the listener.

[1 : 15] Just before this incident, we have the parable of the Good Samaritan. And there, Jesus is encouraging love to our neighbor.

Here was this poor man who fell among thieves. And the priest saw him in his predicament and walked past on the other side.

Another religious man came past at Levite. And he looked at him too and went by on the other side. And along came a despised Samaritan, the enemy.

And he saw him and had compassion on him. Came off his animal. Lifted him up. Bound up his wounds. Poured him in oil and wine.

Set him upon his own beast. Took him to the inn. And paid the innkeeper to look after him. Who was the neighbor to him that fell among thieves?

[2 : 26] The Samaritan. He was his neighbor. Go thou and do likewise. We are encouraged to show love.

And love in a practical way. It's easy to say, I love you. But it's a different thing to show it.

Love is not simply a matter of feelings. Or of words. But also of action. Love is not simply a matter of feelings.

And here was love. Love from a Samaritan to a Jew. And of course, You know who the great, good Samaritan is.

The Lord Jesus Christ. They called him a Samaritan and said he had a devil. He came from heaven. Came, as it were, off his beast.

[3 : 29] All the way from glory. Came into this world. To us. Lying in the gutter. Beaten, bruised, battered, dying.

And he picked us up. And he washed us. Pouring oil and wine into our wounds. And he set us upon his own beast.

And took us to the inn. And he paid the innkeeper with his own blood. And so you and I have life through him. The good Samaritan is teaching us love.

Go thou and do likewise. And love in a very practical way. Helping the man who fell among thieves.

But, now we come to Martha and Mary. And this is teaching us that it's not simply a matter of practicalities.

[4 : 32] But there is also to be a listening. A sitting at the feet. A receiving and embracing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As he has taught to us in the Gospel. Martha and Mary were both godly women. They were both Christians.

Very different. Different in their personalities. And different in their ways. They were both good women.

But Jesus particularly praises Mary. Mary hath chosen the good part. That shall not be taken from her.

Listening. Trusting. And following love. Is particularly required of us. So, first tonight then.

[5 : 31] I would like us to look at a loving hostess. Then secondly. To look at a loving disciple. And then thirdly. To look at a loving rebuke.

First. A loving hostess. Jesus comes to Bethany. Two miles east of Jerusalem. It was a place that he went to.

From time to time. And there was a home there. That he loved to stay in. It was a place where he was particularly welcome. And they told that.

He entered into this village. And a certain woman. Named Martha. Received him into her house. So it would seem that the house.

Belonged to Martha. Perhaps she was the oldest. Maybe she was a widow woman. We don't know. But.

[6 : 28] It's called Martha's house. And Mary lived there. And from. John's gospel. We learn that. Lazarus lived there too. Their brother.

She received him. Into their house. And Martha. Loved Jesus. She welcomed him. And here was a very special guest.

And so she tries her best. To make Jesus welcome. She's extremely hospitable. Hospitality is something that is greatly commended in the scriptures.

Time and again. Especially in the epistles. There are exhortations. To us. To be hospitable. To show hospitality to all men.

For thereby. Some have entertained angels. Unawares. When you're hospitable. You never know. You might be receiving an angel into your home.

[7 : 33] It's such a blessing. To be kind. To be kind. And loving. And to have an open home. And a home where people are welcome. Particularly where the Lord's people are welcome.

She wants to give Jesus the very best. And so she's working hard. She's cooking the meal. And she's serving. She's getting everything ready.

She's cooking. Well it couldn't have been easy. It wasn't just Jesus that she had to entertain. There were also his 12 disciples.

Jesus and the 12. That makes 13. And then there was Mary and herself. And Lazarus. That makes 15. 16 rather. And then.

No doubt there were others too. Perhaps there were 20 folks. There. And she was making a meal for all these people. And you can imagine. The work that was involved in that.

[8 : 34] And she wanted it to be really special. Because Jesus is such a special guest. And what a privilege it was. To have Jesus in her home.

And there was so much to be done. You can imagine her. The soup is coming over. The fire is burning. The meat has to be cut. The sweetest to be made.

She's panicking. She cannot cope. And there's Mary. Listening to Jesus. And she feels jealous.

And it gets on her nerves. There she is. Running around as fast as she can. And Mary is providing her with no help. That's not fair. She loses her temper.

And in the end. She's even blaming Jesus. Dost I not care. She says. Lord. Dost I not care. That my sister hath left me. To serve alone.

[9 : 37] Lord Jesus. Can you not see me here. So busy. And you don't seem to care. That my sister's not helping me. Bid her therefore.

That she come to help. I'm sure there are many women here. Who sympathize with Martha. You can understand.

What it felt like. With all these people in ours. And this meal to be done. And Mary not helping. Martha loved Jesus.

She wanted to please him. And to give him the very best. Our loving hostess. Do you have an open home. Are you kind and welcoming to all.

It's a good thing. To be hospitable. But in the second place. We notice. Our loving disciple. Mary.

[10 : 45] We're told about her. That she sat at Jesus' feet. And heard his word. It would seem that to begin with. Before Jesus came. That Mary was helping.

And maybe to begin with. Even after Jesus had come. Mary was helping. For we're told. Martha said. Nor dost thou not care. That my sister hath left me.

To serve alone. To begin with. She was with Martha helping. And then left her. And sat at Jesus' feet. Mary had lost interest in everything else.

Only one thing seemed to matter. She loved Jesus so much. And she wanted to hear.

Every word that he spoke. It was such a rare opportunity. To have the Son of God. Present in her home.

[11 : 46] The King of Israel. The Messiah. And he was speaking so many wonderful words. And oh how she loved.

To sit at his feet. She couldn't drag herself away from his feet. To start cooking. And serving. It was so wonderful. Just listening to the words of Jesus.

To ask him questions. To hear others asking questions. To hear the answers that he was giving. To hear others asking. I wonder are you like Mary.

Do you value your Bible? Do you love to read it? As it were to sit at the feet of Jesus. And as you read the verses of scripture.

Asking. What is Jesus saying to me here? What message has God for me here today? Do you love to come to church?

[12 : 47] To sit there? To sing? To pray? To hear the reading of the word? To receive the word preached? Do you love the means of grace?

And do you have an appetite for these things? He who hears you hears me. Says Jesus to his disciples. Those who listen to you.

My disciples. Are really listening to me. And when you listen to the preacher. Preaching God's word. You're listening to Christ. Are the words of Christ.

Life to your soul. Peter says. Desire the sincere milk of the word. That you may grow thereby.

Have a hunger and a thirst for it. Feed upon it. Absorb it. Into your own minds and memories.

[13 : 50] So that you will grow. Thereby. Just as babes. As newborn babes. Newborn babe.

Thereby. There's no use coming along with toys. And trying to amuse them. They're not interested in that. There's just one thing in their minds. They're wanting food.

And they'll be satisfied with nothing but food. And if you deny them that. How they cry for it. they don't want toys they don't want playing they want food and that's the way we should be as christians just like newborn babes and it seems there's only one thing on our minds that is food for our souls the word of god the means of grace we love to come to church how lovely are thy tabernacles o lord of hosts to me that's what the psalmist was saying like as the heart for water brooks and thirst of pant and pray so pants my longing soul after thee o god thirsting panting longing after god you know how when we were children our parents would say to us eat your food so that you will grow up and if you don't eat your food you'll never grow up well it's like that spiritually too if you don't eat your food you won't grow it's even more necessary spiritually than physically and without spiritual food you perish one of the names for a christian is a disciple and that name means pupil or student somebody who is sitting at the feet of the master the teacher seeking to be taught are we disciples are we teachable are we absorbing the truth are we good listeners and learners from god's word having a real appetite for these things are we like mary seeking first the kingdom of god more than anything else seeking first the priority what jesus has to say mary was a woman but that made no difference she came to christ she was received by christ even although she was a woman he regarded her as a good pupil a good disciple in jesus christ there is neither jew nor gentile there is neither male nor female there is neither bond nor free we are all one in christ as far as christianity is concerned there's no difference between man and woman men and women need the new birth men and women need the indwelling of the spirit men and women need the food for their souls and men and women together grow into the people of god here we have a loving disciple mary sitting at the feet of jesus listening learning are you are you a disciple of christ do you have an appetite for god's word do you love to hear the truth and to feed upon it and thirdly a loving rebuke first the loving hostess martha then the loving disciple mary

thirdly a loving rebuke martha martha there's a lot of emotion in these words the repeating of her name martha martha thou art careful and troubled about many things but one thing is needful and mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her martha you have many cares many worries and that is sinful but that is so common for us isn't it we get so troubled so bowed down with cares we're so busy and we allow ourselves to become so entangled and at times it just seems everything is crowding in upon us we've got no time to think no time to pray no time to read our bibles no time for church no time for anything martha martha thou art cumbered about many things but one thing is needful why all the fuss martha martha martha martha why are you so bothered why are you so busy relax no doubt there was a bit of pride in martha too she wanted to make a good show she wanted to show that she was such a capable housewife such an efficient worker such an excellent cook and there were all these important people in and she was wanting things to be oh just right and pride can cause us an awful lot of trouble trying to keep up appearances trying to make a good show trying to keep up with the joneses what a hassle it is sometimes and how unnecessary thou art cumbered about many things thou art careful and troubled about many things now in the midst of all our cares what should we do with them we should come to the lord and we should confess to him and cast our cares upon him and leave them with him i know in myself that so often i allow things into my mind into my thoughts and these things keep working away there and i allow myself to be cumbered with these thoughts these thoughts these worries these cares and i come to god and i pray about it and then i go away and i'm still worrying and bothered about it and it's not right i ought to cast my burden on the lord and leave it there not take my burden to him and then take it to myself again not allowing myself to be submerged with worries or cares or whatever but rather to realize that i have a heavenly father who cares the shepherd of israel who looks after me to leave my cares with him to pray about it and leave it there but we make an idol sometimes of our cares and we allow these things

to go on and on and round and round and round and round in our minds and we think of it this way and we turn it that way and we we say we will do this and we think we will do that and we will respond in this way and so it goes on and on and on and on and when we ought to be praying and praising and worshipping god and rejoicing in god and our hearts full of peace and joy and love we're bowed down with cares Martha Martha thou art careful about many things but one thing is needful are you tonight careful about many things worried troubled anxious bothered plagued with certain thoughts and concerns and difficulties and anxieties and troubles the things of tomorrow and the things of the next day and of the next day and it's going on and on and on round and round in your mind cast thy burden on the lord and be thou doing good and so thou in the land shalt dwell and verily have food come unto me all you that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you for my yoke is easy and my burden is light and you shall find rest unto your souls

[23 : 30] I think it was in Spurgeon that I was reading that a little earth a little earth cast upon the fire in your soul will make it burn very low and why is the flame within us burning so low is it not that there's so much of the earth being cast upon the flame too busy for Christ too much to do there you are and you're looking after your family and you've got your involvement in your home and your involvement with your job and you're so busy day and night you've got no time to think but you've got to think and you've got to stop it's time to turn off the music time to put off the television time to stop the frantic running around be still and know that I am God stop and think and pray oh but there's so much to be done there's the baking the hoovering the dusting there's people coming for a meal

I've got to have it ready at such and such a time I can't stop and you're on the treadmill and you're running running running and you cannot stop be still get your priorities right put first things first seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness stop trying to be super woman or super man believe in God he is the only super person we can even be too busy in the Lord's work sometimes too busy running around meetings organizing events visiting the sick and friends and all sorts of things doing this that and the next thing all kinds of excellent practical things and what Martha was doing was excellent hosting the Lord

Jesus Christ and his friends but stop Martha realize what is vital you're going too far you're allowing yourself to be too busy stop you're trying to run your life perfectly and nothing is perfect in this world you are setting for yourself an impossible standard lower the standard a little bit and put things in the right perspective you want everything to go like clockwork but things don't go like clockwork in this world sin has come in and spoiled everything trust in God look to him pray to him stop the worrying be careful and anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ take no thought for the morrow that would be wonderful wouldn't it if only you and I could be like that take no thought for tomorrow don't give it a second thought tomorrow shall take care for the things of itself sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof leave tomorrow just get on with living today a day at a time one thing is needful one thing not 20 things or 50 things or 100 things or even two things but one thing is needful and what is that needful thing

Christ listening to him receiving embracing him embracing him one thing is needful seek first the kingdom of God the king in your life God the king are we people are you a person who has one concern one interest one predominant concern Martha Martha careful and troubled about many things but one thing is needful and Mary has chosen that good father can be done?

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