**Luke 10:38-42**

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed 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 up 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** but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

**“One Thing Necessary”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. What happens when there is so much to do and not enough time to do it? You would think that in an advanced age like ours this kind of question would be outdated. Machines do much of the heavy work now days. Science continues to bring new discoveries to better life. People even have more freedom in choices than ever before. However, that haunting pressure lingers on with, “to much to do and not enough time to do it.” The blessing God originally gave to Adam and Eve to work just keeps going off the tracks. Regardless the times we are in or how well we manage them. There must be a firmer foundation for sinners.

Here is what made our synod convention last week admirable for us as a church body. It was not because delegates passed so many needed resolutions, which they did, but there was a right tone set by the convention theme, “Upon This Rock.” President Harrison in his opening sermon declared, “The future of the Missouri Synod does not depend upon you or me. It depends upon Christ, the rock.” Both Martha and Mary in our text today also loved the Lord. The difference became evident by what took priority at the very moment Jesus entered their house. One sat at the feet of Jesus, the other was on her feet. There is nothing wrong with loving acts of service, but the great gift is when God serves us by the Word of Jesus.

1. **The loving act of service by Martha was not bad while Mary was good**.
2. Welcoming Jesus into her house was the right thing to do!

* This was the kind of hospitality that even Abraham showed the Lord and two angels when they visited him.
* What is remarkable about Martha is how a woman welcomes Jesus into her home and He accepts the offer.
* The task before her demanded a great deal of effort considering who was with Jesus, which was at least the twelve disciples.
* Such care by Martha was not seeking to justify herself like a lawyer who asked “And who is my neighbor?”, but simply wanted to serve.

1. Loving acts of service are certainly the right thing to do in our life.

* The most basic need at home is taking care of your chores.
* Rather than doing evil, we should want to seek out doing what is good.
* Likewise, the New Testament goes out of the way to say, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers…” (Hebrews 13:2)
* A servant role like Martha takes the law of love seriously toward both God and our neighbor.

1. **Yet, any temporary service of love is never good enough to end the madness.**
2. Martha’s problem was how she missed what at the time was going on before her.

* As amazing as it was for her to welcome Jesus, it was even more amazing how welcoming Jesus was to teach women in their home!
* Sadly, all of Martha’s active love was too much and became loveless toward her own sister who appeared selfish by sitting at the feet of Jesus.
* Her service had no end and it drove Martha mad to the point where she came right out with, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.”
* Jesus exposes her true pain saying, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.”

1. Our problem always goes back to letting the many things that are good to do get in the way of what God does for us.

* More amazing than success in life or the progress of man is how Jesus still welcomes sinners to hear Him.
* None can multi-task for listening to the Word puts us in a position of being receivers rather than doers before Jesus.
* The many anxieties and troubles of Martha we find in us. What drives you to point the finger at your neighbor? What pushes you to doubt God cares? What forces your back against the wall? The Law never saves, works never cease, and love grows cold in the hands of sinners.
* Grasping at many things leaves no time for the One who wishes to save sinners. Jesus warns in the parable of the Sower, “Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.” Luke 8:18).

1. **Mary chose the good potion, because Jesus chose deeply to extend His love to them.**
2. God’s Will was not to be a guest in that house, but the host of a kingdom hidden in Christ.

* As the Lord gave His promise to Abraham and Sarah of a child, so Jesus spoke the greater news of life for sinners fixed upon His death and resurrection.
* What Mary received would not be taken away since Jesus provided everything for faith in Him of sins forgiven, salvation secure, and eternal life.
* There was plenty of time later for hospitality, but the gift of His Word first would lay a firm foundation for an anxious and troubled Martha.
* While all other kinds of goodness only go so far and are subject to change, the indispensable Word of Christ is what will always save sinners.

1. God’s Will is to give you the good portion that the Law never satisfies, but the Gospel gladly gives.

* Do the demands of life bring every distraction at home? Jesus has not lost focus but brings every good for you saying, “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (Matthew 20:28).
* Are you being drug around as if you have no control? Jesus dragged every burden to His death so that His love speaks forgiveness proving, “he has now reconciled (us) in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him…”
* Does anxiety make you wonder if God cares? The baptized welcome the answer as we sang before the Gospel reading, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).
* Are troubles over the kingdoms of this world weighing down on you? Take heart, Jesus comes to eat and drink with us the good portion of His kingdom that will not be taken away.

Among the busyness of humanity, God is busy holding out the best answer for sinners. Martha shows what we need for labor in this life, but it comes with sorrows before God. Mary shows eternal life needs no labor, but it comes with every blessing worked by God for us. God’s Word stands the test of time, since it all at last falls upon Jesus. There is a time to play, work, eat, sleep and they are all distinct. The same goes for worship when God wants us to receive what He gives. Luther states in the Large Catechism, “Whenever God’s Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or mediated upon, then the person, day, and work are sanctified. This is not because of the outward work, but because of the Word, which makes saints of us all” (LC I 92). There is nothing wrong with loving acts of service, but the great gift is when God serves us by the Word of Jesus. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.