

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
August 11, 2019
9th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Genesis 18:1-14, Colossians 1:21-29
Hymns: 16; 366:1-5; 408; 50:2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴² But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Busy, busy, busy! --

There is stress at work and there are bills to pay, and the children need attention, the "to do" list for any given day

seems almost overwhelming. Then there is that other list, the “round-to-it” list that is always on the back on one’s mind. There are things waiting to be fixed, projects I really think I’ll do someday, organize the garage, clean out my files, build that other small workbench for the basement, not to mention waxing the car. Of course there are professional projects waiting as well. When you can finally get away and have some down time, the last thing you want to do is -

THEME: Come and Sit at Jesus’ Feet.

There is a voice back there in our minds saying something to the effect of: “I just don’t have time to bother with church!”

Really? Is it a burden to sit at Jesus’ feet or is it a blessing? You know the answer to that question. You know it’s a blessing. But how often do we think of taking the time to come to church as “sitting at Jesus’ feet?” Well, it is exactly that. Jesus has something to say to us. Think of that. Please, think of that, Jesus has something to say to you, something to say to me. JESUS has something to say, not just any body on the street, who knows what who cares. This is Jesus, the power of the creating Word; Jesus the Word made flesh; Jesus our Redeemer and our Lord; **He** has something to say to you.

I. Set Aside Your Cares and Worries.

That is what Martha was struggling with. Jesus, and she knew this was a big deal, Jesus had come to her house for dinner! Just think if the President of the United States came to your house for dinner. Even if you don’t like him, it is the President! Jesus is a much, much bigger deal, and Martha knew it, and she wanted everything to be perfect for the Lord. She ended up being quite agitated as she scurried, trying to get everything done just right to honor the Lord. It really bothered her that Mary wasn’t helping. Mary was just sitting by Jesus, listening to Him.

We can relate, right? We can all relate with that state of agitation that comes with trying to do our best when we could use a hand, and it isn't there. The cares, the worries of life get to us, and we wish that **we** could just sit! However, things that are pressing are not always the things that are truly important. It is too easy for us to get swept along with what appears to be absolutely urgent and necessary when something far more special is right there waiting for us.

And that my friends is lesson one of our text isn't it? Even when things are being done in service to the Lord, and all our lives should actually be in service to the Lord. Whether it's doing our best at work, we should work as for the Lord, or at home caring for the blessings the Lord has given us, caring for the people the Lord has brought into our lives, we live to the Lord. It is all ultimately done to honor Jesus.

From the beginning the Lord set aside the Sabbath not only to find rest for mind and body, but far more importantly to find rest for one's soul, to build up and strengthen one's spirit. The Holy Spirit sets this lesson before us that we might learn how important it is for us to set aside other concerns, and sit at Jesus' feet.

II. We need to Listen to Jesus' Saving Word.

Jesus had something to say to Martha, One thing is needed. Martha thought there were so many things that needed to be done, needed to be served. Jesus' said, "One thing is needed." All those other things are not needed anywhere near as much as we lead ourselves to believe. And that includes relaxation and recreation. Mary chose that good part. The good thing, the needed thing was what Mary was receiving by sitting at Jesus' feet. It was His saving Word. The natural man, our old adam doesn't agree with that assessment, that Jesus' Word, His saving Word is so needed that I can't live without it. My flesh asserts, "I

can get by just fine without it!" Well, really? Are you sure? Jesus doesn't agree with that assessment. Jesus is the one that says that the hearing of His saving Word is THE one thing needed!

When you have removed yourself from the influence of this sinful world with all its false ideas about morality, and the origin of the universe, and what's important, then maybe it won't be the one thing needed. When we have rid ourselves of our own sinful lusts and desires, and all the bitterness and anger, and rancor that comes our way and the stress of life, **then** maybe it won't be the one thing needed. When we are no longer tempted by the devil, or accused by conscience, **then** maybe it won't be the one thing needed.

But until then I need the saving Word of our Lord. I need Jesus telling me of the righteousness that He alone brings to a sinful mankind by His holy righteous life, and the redemption that comes to me also by His innocent sufferings and death. I need to know about the forgiving grace of God that forgives and forgives and forgives every day because of the great faithfulness of our God who looks down upon us in the greatness of His love and compassion. **This I need!** This is that good part. This is what we receive when and only when we sit at Jesus' feet. May we chose it as the Lord invites us to sit at His feet and hear what He has to say about our hope of everlasting life!

III. There Is so much to Gain by Sitting at Jesus' Feet.

The blessings that come to us as we sit at Jesus' feet never stop coming. It starts with the grace of Jesus' invitation, *"Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ... you will find rest for your souls."* (Matthew 11:28-29) We need that restoring power of Jesus' word. The pressures of this world wear us down, wear down our faith far more than we realize. We need to be

built up, and that happens as we sit at Jesus' feet, hearing His Word. That is the rest that we need. It is the rest that comes with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. We can't hear that too often. We need that call to repentance that lead us to turn away from sin, and to find forgiveness in Jesus' blood and righteousness.

We need **strength**. The trials and tribulations of life are persistent. They will continue throughout life. People get sick. Sickness not only brings pain and suffering, it brings a lot of uncertainty and fears about finances and other challenges of life. It brings temptations to turn to other comforts rather than the Lord. It tests one's faith in God. Sitting at Jesus' feet brings us strength and reassurance, God does not deal with us according to our sin but according to His grace, and He will deliver!

Jesus' Word brings us the true and lasting **comfort of eternal life**.

We have Mary and Martha at home with the Lord as their honored guest, and He brings them the greatest of gifts with His saving Word. Mary started receiving it right away, Martha almost missed out. I really think the evidence shows that she almost missed out, but she didn't miss out in the end. What evidence? Later her brother Lazarus would get sick and die. She had hoped that Jesus would come and heal Lazarus, but on that occasion by the time Jesus arrived at Bethany Lazarus was already dead and buried. Jesus had something to say, and Martha responded with faith.

John 11:23-27 "Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

²⁶ And whoever 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 to come into the world.”

That is the comfort and strength of faith that comes only from sitting at Jesus’ feet and hearing His saving Word. There is so much to gain in faith and understanding and hope and life. On yet another occasion several days before Jesus was to suffer and die He was in Bethany yet again, and yes, Martha was in the kitchen doing what she loved to do for the Lord. Mary entered the dining room and anointed Jesus with as expensive ointment. Jesus, who alone knows the thoughts and the intent of the heart, revealed to all present that Mary did this for His death and burial. **She understood.** She understood that it was necessary for Jesus to go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of His enemies, and be crucified, and die and be buried. Mary in faith and love honored her Redeemer by anointing His body for that burial. How could she have this understanding, this faith, this spiritual insight when others didn’t? *She sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to His saving Word.*

And there we find the hope of heaven. Jesus went to the grave before us, and Jesus rose again. That faith, that knowledgeable faith of Mary and Martha didn’t come by their private meditation on the meaning of life, or marveling on the wonders of nature on a lake shore. It was in their hearts and in their minds because they sat at Jesus’ feet and listened, and received the one thing needed, and it was not taken from Mary, or for that matter from Martha either. When they faced the most difficult trials in their lives they did it with faith and hope and understanding. Those are the blessings Jesus would impart to you as He invites you to sit at His feet and listen to what He has to say to **you**. We don’t know it all. We daren’t even assert, “Now I know enough. I don’t need so much to hear what Jesus has to say.”

Set aside your cares and worries and yes, pleasures too, and take the time to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to His saving Word. *He has something to say to you.*

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.