

Luke 10:38~42

I want to begin this morning, by asking you... **What are your priorities?**

Priorities speak of things that we deem important, and thus place them at the forefront of our lives...

Given the days we are living in, how fast paced everything is, considering how busy we all are, the matter of "**priorities**" becomes even more important. Simply for the fact, if we are not careful, and do not take the time to set some priorities for our lives, we will find ourselves caught up in *the hustle and bustle of everyday life*, and miss the "*important things*" of life!

I've been reminded of this in recent days, with the passing of my brother... That old cliché, "*You don't know what you've got, till it's gone,*" holds more truth than any of us could ever imagine. Sadly and tragically, it's not until we loose someone close to us, that we "*realize*" how important they are to us, and "*realize*" how we allowed "*stupid things*" (in comparison) to take their place, robbing us of what is truly important. (*Beloved, if you have family, and you haven't seen them for a while, you need to set aside all this foolish stuff, that doesn't amount to anything, and make it a priority to spend some time with them.*)

In life, we all need priorities... **What are your priorities?** Better yet, "**What is your greatest priority?**" It's helpful to know something of the word... By "**Priority**," we understand that to mean that which is most needed, the important thing, the main thing! **Priority** comes from the word, "**Prior**." Which simply means "*before,*" or "*ahead,*" or "*preceding.*" A "Priority" then, is something that comes before anything else! It is ahead of everything else. It then represents what we see as supreme, what is essential, that which is *transcendent to everything that follows!* So when you talk about priority, you're really saying, "**What in my life, comes before anything else?**" "**What is before anything else, and everything else?**"

Now, if I were to ask the average guy out here, "*What was their greatest priority in life?*" there might be a lot of different answers. But, if I asked a Christian that question, there should only be one answer, just one. I want to ask you this morning, those of you who identify with Christ... "**What is the number one priority in your life right now?**" I'm not asking for your "*priorities,*" in that of family, church, job, kids, etc... But rather, what is your number ONE priority? Be honest. Given where we are, and what we are doing, most of us here this morning know the "*correct response*"...GOD. But a *correct response* or the "*right answer*" is not what I asking for, but rather a truthful answer. **What is the number ONE priority in YOUR LIFE right now?**

Here in this text before us this morning, we have a statement from the lips of the Lord Himself, that really stresses what that needs to be... <sup>42</sup> ***But one thing is needful:***

I don't know about you...but I love simplicity. The simpler, the better for me. Understood, this passage may well be one of the most important and beneficial truths in the life of a believer. If we understand, the truth that Jesus is teaching here, and not just hear it, but align ourselves with it, everything else in our lives, will fall into place... If we will DO this **ONE THING**...

The story is a simple one, that teaches a very simple truth... It declares the "**ONE THING that is needful**"...Sitting quietly before the Lord, hearing His word.

And according to the story, Mary choose the "*Good part,*" while Martha missed it! As I thought about this, I began to wonder, how many **Mary's** there are here this morning, and how many **Martha's** there are here? Who among you have chosen the "*good part,*" and who have missed it. If hearing "*God's word*" does not take precedent in your life, if it is not the priority...you've missed it! But if it is, if you have chosen the "*good part,*" then you are blessed, and everything else will fall into place...

(Illustration) Read... **Why go to Church?**

I don't need to remind you because you know it... **God speaks through His word.** And God spoke through His Son. And when Jesus speaks, it is God speaking and nothing less! In John 8 verse 26 Jesus said, *"I have many things to speak but He who sent Me is true and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak."* This is the Word of God through the incarnate Son of God. **John 8:28**, *"When you lift up the Son of Man then you will know that I am He and I do nothing on My own initiative but I speak these things as the Father taught Me."* Verse 40, *"You're seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God."* John 7 verse 16...verse 16 says, *"My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me."* In the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of John and the fifteenth verse, Jesus says, *"No longer do I call you slaves for the slave doesn't know what his master is doing, but I've called you friends for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."* Chapter 17 verse 8, *"The words which Thou gave Me,"* Jesus says to the Father, *"I have given to them and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from Thee and they believe that Thou didst send Me."* This and many other times Jesus said, *"These are the very words of God."*

Having said that, the single most priority for all Christians is to hear the revealed Word of God, because as this story makes it so clear, it is prior to every other spiritual duty.

Let us look closer at the story before us... According to the passage, upon entering the small village of Bethany, Martha came out to meet Him, and invited Him to her house, no doubt for a meal. We know that this "certain village" is Bethany, because we learn in John 11, that these two women are the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead. We learn there that these three lived in Bethany. We are told Jesus enters the village, and that Martha invited Him into her home. It is implied, that Martha began to prepare a meal for Jesus and the others. Over the process of getting things ready, Martha began to get upset at her sister Mary, over the fact she was not helping her. The whole time Martha was scrambling around, trying to get things ready, Mary was in the living room, doing nothing. After a short time of this, Martha became extremely aggravated, to the point, she approaches Jesus, and basically says, *"Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work?"* *"Tell her to come and help me..."* But Jesus denies her request, and rather uses the situation to teach what may well be, one of the most important truths we will ever learn...

Rather than rebuke Mary for not helping, Jesus declares to Martha, that it is not Mary that is in the wrong, but rather, it is she. No doubt, Martha was shocked, and in disbelief. I can imagine Martha's first thought, *"How can He say that, when I'm doing all the work, and she is doing NOTHING!"*

*"But Oh Martha, Martha...she is DOING SOMETHING"*... And I say unto you, that *what she is doing, is more important* than anything else, one could possibly DO...

**T:** **The contrast we see here between Martha and Mary, reveals a very important truth...**  
What we **DO** for the **Lord** is not nearly as important...as what the **Lord** can do for us!

Beloved, there is *nothing more important, nothing more needful...* than to spend quiet time, in the presence of our Lord, *being ministered to by Him...*

This is a lesson on "**Priorities**"... Think about it, here in her house, was the Son of God, who possessed the "Words of Life," and she missed it... She allowed "Other things" to come between her and the Lord. The ironic thing, is that the things that distracted her away, was good things, matter of fact, it was service to the Lord. Did you realize, that we can spend our time "serving the Lord," and yet spend no time "with the Lord?" Which is meaningless...because it is only out of the time we spend with the Lord, that our service to the Lord amounts to anything.

Now we need to correctly understand the issue here... There was nothing wrong necessarily with what Martha was doing. There is nothing is wrong with hospitality. It's commanded in the Bible. **Romans**

12:13, 1 Peter 4:10, it's a command to show kindness to strangers. And there's nothing wrong with a woman being a keeper at home, right? Titus 2:4 and 5, women are supposed to be keepers at home, keep the house. And there's nothing wrong with entertaining guests, 1 Timothy 5:10, a widow couldn't be put on the list unless she lodged strangers and shown hospitality. Those are good. It's good to do those things. Her devotion is commendable. That's not the problem...

Martha's problem here, is her priorities ... Here she is scrambling around all over the place, trying to do in her mind a good thing, and loses sight completely of a rare privilege, to hear the Lord of the universe teach privately and personally she and her sister. Her sister took the privilege, she got it. Furthermore, it wasn't bad enough that Martha's priorities were messed up, but once your priorities are messed up your attitude does too. So she starts losing the joy of this service. She becomes agitated. She becomes frustrated. And then she gets mad.

**(Vs 40)** Notice what she says...<sup>40</sup>*But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, **Lord, dost thou not care** that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her that she help me.*

What an indictment...*asking the Lord if He cares?* How can she ask the one who left the portals of glory, the blessedness of heaven, to come to this dark and depraved world, to offer up His life for her...**do you not care?** Beloved, can I just suggest, that when our priorities are not right, when we neglect the main thing, we become selfish and self-centered. Notice the focus became on her, and why no one was helping her.

I understand, that by merely looking on the situation, Martha's complaint seemed legitimate, it seemed just. But when you understand the importance of listening to Jesus' words, when you grasp what was taking place...Martha's question was shameful...

Let's look at the situation from Jesus' perspective... Martha's question, sounded more like this...*"Well Lord, are you going to just sit there and keep talking about divine, life-giving, soul-transforming, sin-shattering, heavenly blessings...and ignore the fact that the table isn't set yet?"*

It's like...*"Lord, I know you know all the secrets of time and eternity, I know you know all that needs to be known about life and death, righteousness and iniquity, and all the glories of heaven...but do you know that the bread is burning?"* And that Mary is just sitting there doing nothing?

Do you see that? Do you see the foolishness of her frustration and her question? What on the surface seems like a logical request, and reason for her to be mad, turns out, (when you understand the priority the word of God is to take in a persons life)...becomes futile and empty...

Martha was all caught up in the bread that perishes...wasn't she? She was worried about the bread that feeds the body, while Mary was seeking the bread that feeds the soul. Mary understood the statement in Deuteronomy 8:3... *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God..."* Mary understood the important thing didn't she?

Martha simply had her priorities all messed up, and missed it didn't she... As I thought about this passage, I began to wonder how many Martha's there were here this morning. But before you condemn Martha, **what is it that keeps you from being here to hear the Word of God?**

You say... *"Preacher, you don't understand, it's been a busy week..."*

I have no idea as to what all you have to do this week... For some of you, your plate may be full already, and the week hasn't even begun. And there may be some things; you feel that you have to get done this week, that to you, are extremely important. But regardless of what they are, there is ONE THING that

overrides them all... I say in the words of our Lord, “*You are careful and troubled about many things...but one thing is NEEDFUL!*” That being, sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His precious word...

What *lame non-priority* occupies you on Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, other times when you could hear the Word of God? Do you think anyone has ever stayed home to fix dinner? Maybe it’s for a sports event, a ball game, a soccer game, golf match, repair job...*all indicative of fouled-up priorities!*

I’m not trying to be ugly or offensive, but the truth is many of you will not come back tonight, nor think of coming Wednesday, to hear more of this precious word. I don’t know, maybe you have a good reason. **But what could be so important, that it take priority over hearing the word of God?**

Listen... Our lives are so full of the unnecessary, and they often control us... That is why we have such teachings, to give a “*heart check,*” to cause us to examine ourselves and see where our priorities lie...

Understood correctly, subjecting ourselves to the “*hearing of God’s word,*” is to be the number one priority in our lives, as believers. I’m not just saying that, trying to get people to come to church. But rather, I only say that, because that is what “*Thus saith the Lord!*” It is to be the “*Chief Priority*” in a Christian’s life! If it is, everything else, will fall into place. But if it’s not, then everything’s out of order.

<sup>41</sup>*And Jesus answered and said unto her, **Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:** <sup>42</sup>**But one thing is needful...***