

## “There Is Only One Thing That Is Necessary”

Luke 10:38-42

Throughout this summer, we are going to continue hearing the Gospel of Luke and how the Word of the Lord grows. Luke is telling a story. He is telling THE story. In the days of Caesar Augustus when Quirinius was governor of Syria, the Christ was born. I am not telling you this so that we can celebrate Christmas in July. Luke goes to great detail to tell us that the Christ came into the world as the child of Mary. And we celebrate that – mightily; with trees and lights and gifts.

And it is right that we make a big deal about God being born as a baby. It was necessary. The reality that the Son of God became human, is incarnate (that is, He took on flesh) is at the heart of the story. John tells us very simply, “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.”

The Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, lives in and around real people, in real communities, in the real ancient world. There is a mountain of evidence both inside and outside of Scripture that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that a man named Jesus of Nazareth lived and died during the days when Pontius Pilate was governor in Judea. Even those who hate Christ and His Church cannot deny this. There is no credible historical scenario where Jesus of Nazareth did not die on the cross.

But we know the story doesn't end there. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! We are Easter people. The resurrection of the body and

life everlasting is our goal. And in Luke's Gospel, all of the story is going to be leading the reader to the cross and the empty tomb; then He walks with two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and He speaks the Word of God beginning with Moses and all the prophets, and after He departed they marveled at how their hearts burned within them as He opened their minds to the Scriptures and they heard His words. And He became known to them when He took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples.

Then Jesus appears to the eleven in the Upper Room and says, "Touch Me and see that I have flesh and bones." Jesus has a body. He has hands; He has feet. He is human before and after the resurrection. He even eats with them. And then, in His body, He ascends into heaven. And now He comes to us in His body in the breaking of the bread.

In the coming weeks we are going to hear more parables and words of Jesus that are so familiar that we almost forget to listen to what they really mean. Last week we heard the Parable of the Good Samaritan – but it is not a story instructing us on the how-to's of Christian living. It was told to show how far away any of us are from keeping God's Law.

"Love your neighbor as yourself" is a demand of the Law that shows us how desperately we needed the Son of God to come into this world and rescue us from the guilt of our sin.

This week, we hear of Mary and Martha who had welcomed Jesus into their home. And He ate with them. And Mary sat at Jesus' feet and "heard His words." I know the English translation says, "listened to His teaching." But the Greek is so plain even I can read it without the help

of a dictionary.

Literally, she “heard the Word of Him.” How is Jesus revealed? Just like at Emmaus, we hear the Word of Him. Paul reminds us, “Faith comes by hearing.” Martha is distracted, encumbered, burdened by her serving. The word is diakonia, which is the church’s word for good works. We use this in the new logo of the LCMS “Mercy, Witness, Life Together.” Some of the logos aren’t in English and they say “Diakonia.” Mercy, like the Good Samaritan showed mercy to the man on the roadside.

Martha was encumbered, burdened, distracted, dragged away by her works of service – her diakonia, the epitome of doing the right thing. She has a guest in her home. She has to provide the meal.

And she is being dragged away from Jesus’ words by justifying herself that she is doing work and service that is necessary and expected. And she begins to judge not only her sister, but she casts judgment on God and the value of hearing the words of Jesus. “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?”

Oh, how we love to justify being distracted or dragged away from hearing the Word of God. There is work around the house that needs to get done. Sunday morning is the only free time I have to do it. Saturday is the only night we can stay out late. Sunday morning is the only day I am not required to wake up early. The kids have a tournament out of town, and it is necessary that we are there.

Jesus says, “there is only one thing that is necessary.” And our culture has sought to justify all of the good works like spending time with you family, working hard and being industrious, striving to excel in sports and school, maximizing the gifts that God has given us so that we

can better ourselves and our families. We create schedules that consume all of our time.

When you are signing up for the activities that fill your days, remember that there is only one thing that is necessary. We come to hear the Word of God because this is what the people of God do. We come to the Lord's Table because Jesus says, "Take; eat; this is My body . . . this is My blood . . . do this in remembrance of Me."

We all have 128 hours in the week. It is necessary that we sleep; it is necessary that we eat; it is necessary that we work. Figure out how many other hours you spend each week on chosen activities or simply on yourself.

Within Scripture and within the church, we speak of the very good practice of tithing (giving 10%) of our income. We are but stewards of all that God has given. However, your most precious commodity is time. My time is the most valued gift I can give my children. Figure out how many hours you spend each week on chosen activities or simply on yourself, and tithe your time.

If your schedule, regardless of how innocent or beneficial your activities may be, if your schedule distracts you or drags you away from hearing the Word of God, that is a very dangerous way to live. This is a 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment and 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment issue.

The Eternal Son of God became human. He took on flesh and blood so that He could be nailed to a cross and take away the guilt of your sin. And He now comes to you in flesh and blood in the miraculous union and communion of the Sacrament.

With all of the troubles, burdens, and distractions of this sinful world, there is only one thing that is necessary. Amen.