

Things Most Necessary

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Date: 21 July 2024

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you, brother. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 10. In this second half of chapter 10, we come across two of the most familiar stories.

I think we, if you've been around the Bible long, you've heard these stories probably several times. The parable, well, it's called the parable of the Good Samaritan.

And then the little situation between Mary and Martha. Some of you are familiar with, right? So we have one story about racial tension and another story about family tension.

We have one story about what's priority. What is it? What is the sum core of what God calls us to do?

And then we have another story where Jesus kind of narrows it all down to just one thing that's really necessary. So this is about priorities.

[1 : 2 1] This is about focus. This is about what really matters in life. What is it about? So that's what we're focusing in on today.

So if you're able, please, if you have Luke, chapter 10, open, we're going to read from verse 25 through 42, the end of the chapter. And then we'll pray and then we'll dig in.

So look at you. You're already standing. I didn't even say anything. Luke chapter 10, beginning of verse 25. Behold, look, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said to him, what is written in the law? How do you read it? He answered, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus said to him, you have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, and who is my neighbor?

[2 : 4 0] Jesus replied, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance, a priest was going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the opposite side.

But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

He went to him and bound up his wounds by pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

And the next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, Take care of him. And whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.

[3 : 5 7] Jesus said, Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?

He said, The one who showed him mercy. And Jesus said to him, Go, and you do likewise.

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.

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 to help me. The Lord answered her, and this is very tender, by the way. Martha, Martha.

[5 : 05] When you see two words, two names together like that, it's a tender response, not a harsh response. Martha, Martha. You are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.

Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her. So it reads, let us pray. Father, guide us today as we look at these two familiar scenes, as we consider what Jesus is presenting, how he deals with a, an insincere, proud, arrogant lawyer, and two sisters who are good people.

Help us see ourselves in these stories and help us to take away, Father, what Jesus would have us to embrace.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Do y'all remember the movie City Slickers?

Yeah? Remember that? Remember that? It's a silly comedy. Billy Crystal, if you remember him, he was in it. He was, and it was a story about these, these men who lived in Manhattan who were unhappy.

[6 : 43] They were friends that went on these little adventures every year without their wives. They just wanted to get away, you know, a men's retreat. They were all in midlife crisis.

They were all Manhattan yuppies. And the two friends roped the other friend into a cattle drive in the Southwest.

Thus, you have City Slickers. Roped. Did you get that? Yeah. Yeah, okay. Accidentally, as they're on this cattle drive, and they're City Slickers, they don't know what they're doing. The main character accidentally causes a stampede.

He was making coffee in the morning or something. I think he was grinding the beans. Anyway, so they get in trouble. They're out searching for the stray cows, and Billy Crystal finds himself with Curly.

Now, Curly's the old cowboy. He's kind of hard and crusty and not smiling, and he's a little scary.

[7 : 49] Old Curly. And after he spends a little bit of time with him, he finds that, you know, there's actually some substance to Curly. and they're talking about, you know, not being happy in life or, and, and old Curly says, there's just one thing.

One thing. One thing. And, uh, Billy's character, there's, I don't understand. What's that? One thing.

Just find one thing. That's all you need to do in life. Find that one thing. One thing that will make you content in life.

That will give meaning to your life. One thing that, that, that matters. One thing that is the most important thing of all the things you're distracted with. And, of course, at the end of the movie, uh, Billy Crystal's character finds that that's his family.

Uh, uh, um, so that's Hollywood's version of finding happiness, right? But, but it, it's the, Jesus brings up that same idea.

[9 : 00] One thing. One thing necessary. One thing that's most important. One thing that's indispensable. One thing of all the things that are good. One thing that really matters.

Some people think that's career or accomplishments. Some people believe that's family or security. Or some dream. But what is it, and many follow down those paths and don't find contentment or happiness.

So what is it? And so let us hear what Jesus says today about what really brings us to understand what really matters.

So it begins, uh, in the scene. It starts in verse 25. We have a lawyer, a man who comes up to test Jesus. A lawyer means, uh, not lawyer like today's lawyers who go to court and stuff.

We're talking about a lawyer of the Old Testament, an expert in the law of Moses. This is a scholar of high rank who understood the Old Testament, who knows all the commands, knows all the duties, uh, could probably recite all the commands for you, could even order them for you, which is what scholars did back then.

[10 : 22] They took all 613 commands and they put them into different categories and then they sorted them out and they decided which were more important than others. And he comes to test Jesus and that's Luke's clue to us that this man's not genuine.

He came to test. He's not asking a genuine question. He's the professional, he's the expert, and he looks at Jesus as an amateur. As a fly-by-the-night new, new, uh, popular teacher.

And he wants to expose his, inexpertise. So, he asked Jesus the question, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

What duty, what, what thing must I do to inherit eternal life? But here is a man who's, who's asking this question not just to test Jesus, but really to trap him, to try to back him into a corner.

And as I've read through the New Testament and read through the Gospels, I've come to the conclusion that it's not a good idea to try to back Jesus into a corner. One, he's smarter than you are.

[11 : 38] And two, he can see right through you. And, and he will, will reverse the tables on you. You'll be the one looking like an idiot. Which is what, exactly what happens in this story.

So Jesus turns the tables, you know, there's the old saying, why does a rabbi answer questions with a question? And the answer is, why wouldn't a rabbi answer questions with a question?

But we see this all the time with Jesus. He asks questions, he's asked a question, he turns it back. He wants you to think. He always wants you to think. And so he turns the table on this guy.

He asks, what must I do? And Jesus says to him, verse 26, what's written in the law? You're the lawyer, what's in the law? What have you concluded?

How do you read it? How do you interpret it? How do you understand it? And so the man gives his answer and he gives a good answer. Jesus, in fact an answer, Jesus says, yeah, you're correct.

[12 : 46] He answers with the great commandment. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Now that's what Deuteronomy 6, 5 says, those three, heart, soul, strength.

And he adds mind because, probably because Luke is writing to non-Jewish readers who would not understand heart in the Jewish sense.

The heart is the mind in the Jewish sense. Not emotions, that's the soul, the heart, soul, strength. And so for the non-Jewish readers, he adds mind so that we're understanding it's the whole person.

And so that's the grace commandment. And then he quotes from Deuteronomy 6, 5, and then he quotes from Leviticus 19, 18, a whole different book, but he's obviously compared all these things.

And he says, the grace commandment is love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul. Heart, soul, and strength. And your neighbor as yourself. Those are the two. And we know elsewhere Jesus says, yes, those are the two greatest commandments.

[13 : 55] And everything in the Old Testament rests on those two. They're the root, they're the heart, they're the core. If you do those, you do it, you've fulfilled everything. So he answers correctly, verse 28, Jesus says, yeah, you got it right.

Good for you, lawyer, you actually read the law. And then Jesus says what? Do this and you will live. Remember the original question, what shall I do to have eternal life?

Jesus says, do this and you will live. You will live. If you can keep the law, you will live. So that's simple.

That's the simple, right? Love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. How many can do that? Every day, all the time, all my heart, my thoughts, and my attention, all my soul, all my affections, and all my strength, everything I've got.

What do we call that in men's group? The ma'od. Oh, and your neighbor as yourself, as much as you love yourself.

[15 : 11] Which, by the way, does not, modern churches want to say, oh, when Jesus said love your neighbor as yourself, he's saying you have to love yourself first. No, no, not even close.

No, love others like you already love yourself, even if the way you love yourself is totally distorted. Because you do love yourself, no matter what you, even if you hate yourself, you love yourself, because you're all preoccupied with yourself.

You're the most important person. Okay? I mean, you'll do anything for yourself. So, didn't want to get off on that.

So, so then the man raises, verse 29, okay, he's got a second thing in his arsenal here. Okay, Jesus passed that one. Okay, verse 29, then desiring to justify himself, he said to Jesus, now being a lawyer, being a scholar, they debated about this for a long, long time, who's the neighbor?

What does it mean to love your neighbor? Who is my neighbor? Right? And they look all through Leviticus, they look through Deuteronomy, they look through the law, who's my neighbor? And for the Jewish rabbis and the scholars, it's other Israelites.

[16 : 30] And then those Gentiles who convert to Judaism will be kind to them too. And so, to justify himself, to say that, okay, Jesus has got this going, who's my neighbor?

He thinks he's okay, see? He thinks he's okay. So to justify himself, to get that, you know, when he's saying, who's my neighbor, he's also saying, who's not my neighbor?

Where's the line? What makes me safe? It better be just these people because I can do that. I'm okay with these people because they're like me.

We have the same skin color. We have the same background. We have the same likes and dislikes and we have the same opinions.

And we like, we all like the 49ers. And so we can get along. So Jesus tells the story, right?

[17 : 41] He answers by telling the story. And it's a shocker. It's the last thing this guy expected. He's going to turn his world upside down.

So we come then to this story. So he tells the story about what is called the Good Samaritan. And then it follows, Luke follows it with the story of Martha and Mary.

Both of them relate to priorities. Both of them relate to what's most important. So in the first story, verses 30 to 37, we have this story of the Good Samaritan, which is about loving your neighbor.

Specifically, the greatest, the second greatest commandment to love the neighbor. Let me put it this way. To love the neighbor in your path and to love them with compassion.

To love the neighbor who's in your path, no matter who they are, they're in your path.

[18 : 45] And to love them with compassion. And then the second story is about listening to Jesus. Listening to Jesus, that's the one thing.

So loving your neighbor in your path, what does it look like? So he tells the story. Here's a man, verse 30, that's traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho. Jerusalem's about 2,300 feet above sea level.

And then Jericho's about 1,300 feet below sea level. So it's about a 3,600 foot drop from Jerusalem down. So you're going downhill for 17 miles.

And you're curving around. And it's not a wonderful path. It winds through desert and caves and lots of nice places where robbers can hide, right?

And attack on the road. It's not a road you really should travel alone. But he does. And he's attacked. He's robbed.

[19 : 43] He's beaten. He's left for dead. So you come to verse 31 and Jesus says, well, who's going to help this man? Well, a priest comes. Oh, good. So that's the, you know, the hopes are up because a priest, a priest, that's the man who should be closest to God, right?

That's the man who's in the word. He's doing the work of God. He's full-time minister. He's like a pastor. You'd expect a pastor to do the right thing, right? He's like an elder, right? He's the guy that knows what's right and should be doing it.

So he says, it's a priest by chance. That's interesting. By chance. Just so happened. The priest. He'll do what's right.

He's the most pious. He's the one you expect good from. No, he sees the man and he goes to the other side. He gets about as far away from the hurt man as he could. He doesn't even know if he's alive.

A lot of people say, oh, he's a priest. He's probably worried that the guy's dead and if he touches a dead man, then he's unclean and all that. Get out of here. He didn't even go to look at the guy to know whether he was dead or not.

[20 : 52] And then you got the, okay, well, what about the Levite? That's team B. That's team B. So you got elders and then you got deacons, right? You got the priest who can go in and do the stuff in the sanctuary.

Then you have the Levites. Every priest is a Levite, but not every Levite is a priest. A priest comes from the Levite tribe, but he comes from one division of the Levite tribe.

Tribe, thank you. Like pride, where am I going? From Aaron's family. From Aaron's family. So the other two brothers of the Levites serve, they serve in the temple.

They're still serving in the temple. They're still serving God. But he does exactly the same thing as the priest does. He sees them, gets on the other side of the road, gets as far away, and passes them by.

Then we come to twist in the story. So you got these two guys you expect good from, but they're just callous and cold. They have no mercy. Then we have a twist, verse 33.

[21 : 58] But a Samaritan. You wonder, you know, see, Israelites would have expected, okay, you got priests, Levite, and then a regular Israelite.

That would be the good guy, you know. But Jesus throws it, no, Samaritan. No, Samaritan. And if you don't know, Israelites and Samaritans not only don't get along, but they hate each other.

They despise each other. And not too recent history before Jesus came, they had been fighting each other and killing each other and destroying each other's property. And the Jews had last destroyed the temple of the Samaritans.

They had a temple too. They worshiped the God of Israel. They worshiped God. They believed in the Pentateuch. They had some other screwy ideas though. Because remember where the Samaritans came from?

Remember back before Israel was, when they were cast out of Israel, the northern ten tribes, remember they were cast out to Assyria.

[23 : 01] And the king of Assyria started putting his own people in there and other people in there. There were a few Jews left, but mostly it was Gentile stuff. That's why the southern Jews call Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles.

So there are some pure Jews undoubtedly mixed in there. But for the most part, half-breed at the best. These were hated people.

So Jesus, here's Jesus saying, here's a Samaritan coming. And probably every Jewish here, and remember how when Jesus wasn't received back at the end of chapter nine in a Samaritan village, remember what James and John wanted to do to that Samaritan village?

Fire from heaven, right? Probably not so much because they had rejected Jesus, but because they were Samaritans. Jesus' top guys, James and John, were racial prejudice men.

Okay? I said, Jesus is going to throw this in here. It's kind of like if it was during the Civil War and they'd say, you know, a slave trader and a slave.

[24 : 21] Okay, how's that going to go? A gray and a blue. You know? Kind of like that, but longer aggression.

So the Samaritan comes and he sees, he comes, came to where he was and when he saw him, he had compassion and they went to him.

He saw him. Here's the big difference. He saw him and instead of getting on the opposite side of the road and getting out of the way and avoiding him, he saw him, he had compassion and then he went to him.

See, compassion is not just I feel bad for that person. Sometimes we can say, oh, we feel for that. We feel that. We feel that.

I feel really bad. Oh, that we empathize. But compassion is bigger than that. Compassion is not just that I feel bad for that. I feel and I, and it moves me and I go and I do something about it.

[25 : 23] I try to help. If it's in my path, compassion drives me to do something. It talks about, the gospel is talking about Jesus felt compassion, right?

He was moved by the crowds because they were like sheep without a shepherd. That moved him. And so he spent time with those people, healing him and teaching them, giving them what he had to give to shepherd them.

See, compassion. He acts and he gives. He does what's needed. Look at all the things he does. He went to him, bound up his wounds, having poured oil and wine on him.

What's oil and wine about? Well, oil apparently softens and soothes the wound and then the wine will disinfect. It was medicinal in that time.

Somebody said, well, shouldn't you put the wine on before you put the, I don't know. Luke wrote it. I'm sure he did it right. I don't know but I did read enough to know that, okay, those are medicinal things and so when we talk about oil, you know, elders, when someone comes to the elders to be prayed for, elders are to apply oil.

[26 : 38] I think that's both medicinal and symbolic. So he does that. Then he set him on his own donkey and brought him to an inn and took care of him and the next day took out two denarii which is quite, that would be enough to take care of the man for about six weeks.

I understand, two denarii and gave them the innkeeper saying take care of him and whatever more you spend I'll repay you when I come back. So he didn't just kind of drop him off, do his good deed and drop him off at, you know, urgent care.

He bound him up himself, took him to a place where he could be taken care of, paid his expenses, planned to return and do more. That's compassion. Not doing the least that I can do, it's doing all that I can do.

For someone that's just in my path. And then the point of this whole thing, verse 36, then Jesus turns back to the lawyer who's testing Jesus, backing Jesus into a corner, you know, here's this guy, I'm gonna show Jesus to be a real amateur.

Jesus has turned the tables all the way and now points back at the lawyer and says, now which of the three, which of the three, you smart lawyer, which of the three had become the neighbor to the man who was beaten?

[28 : 11] Now our text reads, which of them, which of the three proved? The text actually reads, had become. Which of the three had become?

In other words, that had come and did, started to do things, had become the neighbor. He wasn't his neighbor until he acted in compassion. Then he became the neighbor.

That's just an interesting way to put it. Not proving anything. He just became that because he was a man with compassion. He was a man, though he was a Samaritan, he was a man fulfilling the second greatest commandment God had given.

And that Samaritan would have known that command because Samaritans believed in the law of Moses. And so the lawyer, how does he do?

Did you notice that he avoided saying the Samaritan? You notice that he didn't even want to put that name on his lips?

[29 : 17] Rather, he referred to him in the third person as, oh, the one that did mercy. And then Jesus turns it on him again and says, now go.

I'm done with you. Go to you do the same. Command. Started with a question.

Ended with you do the same. Think you're so smart. He didn't say that.

Jesus is more kind. I would have been so kind. I would have been smart enough to figure out a way out of a trap either, but who's my neighbor?

One in your path. One God puts in your path. Somebody that has a need. Somebody that needs compassion. It could be a new person.

[30 : 17] It could be somebody that's been there all along. I don't know. Neighbor means, for the most part, it means someone near to you. So somebody in your path.

It doesn't matter where they're from, what they're like, if you even know them. So why is loving the neighbor in our path such a priority?

Well, it's the heart of the law. Paul repeats this in Romans 13. He says, owe nothing, owe no one anything except to love each other. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

He explains, for the commandments, you shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder. You shall not steal. You shall not covet. And any other commandment are summed up in this word.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you don't have to worry about the rest of the commands. See what he's saying? It fulfills it. If you truly love your neighbor, the one that's in your path, with compassion, you don't have to worry about ever stealing from them.

[31 : 27] If you love your neighbor, are you going to steal from them? Are you going to murder them? Are you going to covet? See? It sums up all the law.

Again, in Galatians 5, Paul answers a question for us because, okay, we say, okay, yeah, it sums up the law.

That's our duty. That's what we should do. But you don't understand my situation. There's some people that are just so hard to love. I do not want to love them.

I do not want to have any, they don't deserve my compassion. So how do you love others when they're not so easy to love, when they're really my enemy and I despise them and I simply just can't do it?

Here's what Paul says in Galatians 5. He says, you were called to freedom, brothers. Christ set you free, set you free from the law. You're not under the obligation of the law, you're under the law of Jesus now.

[32 : 31] You were called to freedom, brothers, only to not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. See, because Christ has set you free from the law doesn't mean you can do whatever your soul wants to do. You're still following Jesus.

But through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There it is again. If you love your neighbor, you fulfill the law.

But, watch, he goes on. But, but, but, I know you Galatians, but if you bite and devour one another, because that's, I know that's what you're doing.

You're fighting and you're bickering, you're quarreling and you're bitter and you're resentful and, watch out that you're not consumed by one another.

But I say, hey, you want an answer for that? I say, walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. How do I love those that are impossible to love? How do I love those that I hate?

[33 : 33] How do I love those that I despise? I can't. But if I walk by the spirit, if I can keep in step with the Holy Spirit, if I can rely on the Holy Spirit, if I can lean on the Holy Spirit, if I can seek the Holy Spirit to give me strength and ability and enablement and even the will to do that, then I can.

In fact, it's the only way I can. The only way I can. How do I overcome the natural instinct to lash out, to hurt those who hurt me?

Well, I need the help of the Spirit. So let me dabble, pry in your life a little bit here. Do you think about who your neighbor is?

Well, hopefully you do today. Do you avoid some neighbors, some people in your path? Maybe God keeps bringing them back in your path.

It's like, come on. How does this look in your life? I'm just asking you to reflect on that. How does that look in your life?

[34 : 49] And the only way you can really know how that looks in your life is not just sit and do an internalized thing on your head, but put yourself on the altar and say, Lord, show me.

Search me. Show me. I really want to do this. Search me. Show me. So, grace, come in. Love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself.

Is there something even more important than that? Apparently so, because that's what we see in the next story. It's a story about a choice that Mary makes and that Martha makes.

And Martha makes the choice to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to his words. And that is the one thing Jesus says that is necessary.

That is the one thing that's indispensable. It's the one thing out of the many things that are good. The one thing that makes all the difference.

[35 : 57] Sitting at Jesus' feet. You can do all those other good things like Martha. You can do all those good serving things, wonderful things. Martha's not the bad person in this story. She's a good person.

She's got a little off. There's one thing. And that's sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his words.

Jesus. So let's look at the story. So verse 38. They went on their way. Jesus entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed into her house.

Now remember, Jesus is on this tour. Remember, he told the twelve and he told the seventy-two as he sent them out. You go into a village and you find a place that will receive you, that will welcome you.

Well, so he comes into this village and who welcomes him? It's Martha. So he's come and we know he's teaching in her house. So he has come to her house. She's that person of peace.

[36 : 58] She's that person that's worthy. She's that person that says, come in my house and use my house as your place to preach and minister. And that's what she does.

Point number one for Martha. Not point, but good for her. That's a good thing. And she had a sister, verse 39, she had a sister called Mary.

And all that, Mary doesn't speak in this story at all. She had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his word.

This is who's teaching, listen. She's just soaking it in. She's just a disciple. By the way, it wasn't something that rabbis allowed back then for women to sit at their feet.

It wasn't a problem for Jesus at all. Not a problem. He's already stirring things up anyway. We know that women were incredibly important to him.

[38 : 01] He welcomed them, wanted them. And here's Mary soaking it up. She's a disciple too. She wants to hear it all. She's just soaking it up. And then we have Martha.

Oh, Martha, Martha, Martha. Verse 40, Martha was distracted with much serving. Literally, she was drawn away by serving.

She's drawn away from the teaching by her serving. See that? And her serving's a good thing. It's much serving. So I imagine Martha's one of these people, you know, she's going to be one of these awesome hostess people, right?

She's going to set the table. She's going to have the house immaculate. She's going to have everything in order. And it's just going to be, you know, wherever everyone comes in, just going, man, this is great. Wow.

She's got her life. She's thought of everything. For the most part. So what it teaches us is even good things, even ministry, even serving Jesus.

[39 : 12] can draw us away from the most important thing. It can distract us.

Good things can draw us from the best thing. So she complains. She goes, she went up to the Lord. Now he's still teaching. Martha.

She goes right up to the Lord while he's teaching. Hey, Lord. I don't know if she says it loud or soft. I don't know. But she's mad. Hey, Lord. Don't you care?

Can you hear it? She's pointing at Jesus, too. Don't you care? You can see it. I know you can see it. I'm running around doing all this, and you know that's Mary, my sister.

She's sitting at your feet. You could get her going. Don't you care? I mean, she is upset.

[40 : 09] Don't you care that my sister has left me? The word actually is a little stronger than that. Deserted me. Abandoned me. Maybe she, they had talked about before, maybe Mary says, I'll help.

And then maybe Mary just got into the teaching and she's lost in that. I don't know what happened. but Martha's implying that she's deserted.

She's left her all to herself to do all the serving. So, what? Jesus, tell her then to help me. She won't listen to me, but she'll listen to you. That's one of those going over the head of somebody, going to Jesus.

I'm going to Jesus. Jesus will get you to do what I want you to do. Except sometimes Jesus says, nah. No, thank you. Nope, nope.

They're good. Come on. So, so, Jesus' response, the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, as I said, that double naming is a tender, very tender.

[41 : 18] He gets her. He gets her. We know from John 11, he loved these women.

and their brother, Lazarus. Right? We know he loved them. So, Martha's not annoying to him. He gets her.

You know, that's how she's gifted. That's how she's wired. She's a doer. Right? That's what she can do. That's what she thinks is the best way to serve Jesus.

And for her, that's her gift. So, he's tender. Martha, Martha. I don't know how he said it, but it was tender. What?

1 a.m.? What? Oh, you got your watch is talking to you? Is it 1 a.m.? I didn't know what that was. No, it's kidding.

[42 : 17] It's usually mine. Don't feel bad. Yeah, yeah. It's usually it was a crystal it's all right. It's happened with mine before too. Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things.

You're anxious, you're worried, and you're troubled, stirred up about many things. And the emphasis is on the many. Probably saying, you know, Martha, you've taken on too much.

Too much. You're overburdened, you've overextended. She'd probably say, well, I was counting on Mary to help, but you can serve and then you can over serve.

You're anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. So the many contrasts with the one.

You're troubled about many things, but one is necessary. Only one thing really matters. There's only one priority over all priorities, and that is listening to the words of Jesus.

[43 : 27] Listening to Jesus comes before serving Jesus. Say, well, serving Jesus. Yeah, serving Jesus.

Absolutely, that's way up there, serving Jesus. But not at the exclusion of listening to Jesus. Jesus. Because his word, which feeds you and directs you and corrects you and comforts you and straightens you, that's more, more, more important than all the doing you can do out of a good and genuine heart.

That's what he's saying to Martha. He's not telling her she's wrong to serve. He's just saying, Martha, turn it down.

And don't put that in front of you. Don't say, well, I've got to serve so I can't be in service. I've got to serve so I can't take some time to read his word.

I've got to do some other things. But they're good that I'm serving the Lord. But then I don't have any time to spend here or here. Oh, I'm using my arm.

[44 : 42] Here. Look, part of my arm's working now. Isn't that amazing? As long as I don't use this, I'm okay. Because my doctor will shoot me. And then he says Mary has chosen the good part.

That's interesting. So, which implies that Martha made a choice too. Martha made a choice. And Mary's made a choice. And Mary's chosen the better thing.

She's chosen the good part. Or portion. It's an interesting phrase that he uses. Portion. Because it's referring to a share.

A lot. An allotment. She's chosen an allotment. She's chosen a share of something that belongs to her. So, portion.

It goes way back to when Israel came into the land and they started dividing the land and they gave out portions. Right? Judah gets a portion. Benjamin gets a portion.

[45 : 48] Levi gets a portion. Levi didn't get a portion. Judah gets a portion. Etc. Etc. Etc. All the 12 tribes get a portion. And the Levites didn't get a portion.

What was their portion? Their portion was the Lord. And Jesus is saying Mary's like a Levite. A real Levite. She's chosen the Lord as her portion.

She's chosen sitting at Jesus' feet. That's her portion. That's her home. That's her refuge. That's her security. That's where she can be and get fed and comforted and at peace.

That's what brings her back to what matters. Does that make sense? So Psalm 119 speaks of this kind of thing about this portion.

Where the writer of Psalm 119 says in verse 57, the Lord is my portion. He's my share. He's my portion. I promise to keep your words.

[46 : 59] So if the Lord is my portion, what does that mean? It means that I keep his words. I entreat your favor with all my heart. Be gracious to me according to your promise, your words, your promise.

When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies. He's my portion, so it's about his words, his promises, his testimonies. I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.

Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget your law. At midnight I rise to praise you because of your righteous rules.

I'm a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love. Teach me your statutes.

Get it? Portions about the Lord and particularly about his word. Because here in Psalm 119, his word, his teaching is called word, testimonies, commandments, law, rules, precepts, statutes, any form of which God speaks to us and guides us and teaches us and directs us.

[48 : 10] And so that's Mary sitting at the feet, choosing the portion of sitting at his feet and listening to his word, his precepts, his statutes, his commandments, his rules, whatever he has to say, that's my portion.

That's my security. That's my refuge. That's my strength. That's my shield. My portion. So what's your portion?

What's your portion? Where do you put your life? What's your home, your refuge, your security? What is it? What is it?

At the end of the day when you're hurting, what is it? I must be going over time.

I don't know. Don't worry. Gives us a laugh break when I got too serious. You know, what is it?

[49 : 21] Just say, I love you, Jesus. Yeah. Can I do that? Can I do that? If Jesus is my portion, I can't. If I'm weighed down with burdens and anxieties and I've been beat up all week, maybe I'm beat up all month, maybe I've been beat up for several years.

What if I'm like David in depression where my soul is cast down? what do I do?

What do I do? What's my portion? Remember what David said in Psalm 42? When he said his soul is cast down, he also said my soul thirsts for you. He interpreted his depression as a thirst for God.

Do you do that? See, David had done it long enough to realize what my real thirst is when I'm cast down, when I'm hurting, when I have nothing, no passion anymore, when I don't have anything.

What that really means, what I've learned from my soul, is that he alone will quench that thirst. trust. That's my portion. See, that's my portion.

[50 : 33] Because it's the only thing, it's the only thing that will lift me up. It's the only thing that will redirect me. It's the only thing that will give me peace. It's the only thing that calls me on my stuff, but in a tender way.

Bill, Bill. I told you before I always picture Jesus sitting up there and he's got Peter next to him and he's knocking Peter and says, watch what we're going to do with Bill.

Peter's like, no, don't do that. No, watch what we're going to do. Because he needs to realize I'm his portion.

What's your security? Where do you find your refuge and peace?

What gives you direction? Is your life rooted in the word of Christ? Do you make time for the word? I think it's indispensable that you be here, not because I have anything, but because this is how God does it.

[52 : 01] This is how he feeds his flock. In a more powerful way, not because I am, but because that's how his spirit works through the foolish and weak things, right?

That's how God works to his people. But not just this, but then your time alone. We have such a blessing to have the word. I mean, we can get it in any translation we want.

You can even take the living, or you can take the... I don't know. I mean, when I was a kid and I couldn't read it, I had a King James Linn. I ain't reading that.

Somebody handed me a good news for modern man. Anybody know what that is? That was written for people that, for English as a second language. That's me. It's like, I think it had like, you know, 50 word vocabulary.

I don't know. Yeah. Do what helps you get into it. If you do the phone thing, great, that's fine.

[53 : 02] There's some great apps you can use. Right? There's some great apps you can use. All right. Only one thing is needed.

Only one thing matters in life. What have you chosen? Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for Jesus, who has his way of calling us on our stuff.

He has a way of dealing with an arrogant lawyer who thinks he's smarter than Jesus. And it has a way of teaching even that man.

And then dealing with Martha, who's lesser heart. A lot of us can identify with Martha. So show us, Lord, who we are in the story.

Show us where you're speaking to us that we might truly take time afterwards to reflect and pray through and make sure you are our one thing.

[54 : 20] This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.