

# Choosing the Good Part: Treasuring God's Word

All right, good evening, everyone. Welcome to Wednesday evening Bible study. I'm going to do something that I normally don't do, and that's ask a question and I want you to meditate upon it. The question is this: I want you to close your eyes for a few seconds and think about in your home, what is the most valuable thing that you think is valuable in your mind? Just picture whatever that is. Is it your home? Is it something that was given to you, passed down? Is it precious metal, jewelry? What comes to your mind?

Well, I'm going to give you what I think is the most valuable, and I hope it is for you as well, and that is the Bible. That ought to be the most precious thing that you possess in your home. I'm going to speak about Jesus. He visited many homes—I could think of Peter's home to heal his mother from a severe illness, fever; Matthew's home, he opened up the home for sinners and publicans, if you remember—but the story I'm going to draw this evening is the home of Martha and Mary. So, if you would, please turn to Matthew chapter—I'm sorry, Luke chapter 10, beginning with verse 38, and just follow along as I read.

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. 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 therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, I thank you for this real story about real people, about a real place, and above everything, the Lord Jesus Christ in it all. Help us to draw from this story, and help me, Lord, to extract the very things that are important in it. I pray your word

and your Spirit will come out and be entered into our hearts, that the words will become real in our hearts, in our spirit, that we may truly cherish the one thing most needful, and that's the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. Bless to that end, in Jesus' name, amen.

I want us to look at some key things in these verses that I found very interesting. I've read this story many, many times, but in this particular time of my preparation, I found some things that really stood out to me, and I want you to follow along with me with those certain texts. I want you to draw your attention to verse 39, and this is the part that most people go to, where it says, "and she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word," and then just kind of go on to the next verse. But I want you to see here that Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.

Now, just picture: Jesus is in this home, and he's saying things, and who's the one that's coming to listen? Well, we see previously, Martha received him. I would say, wow, she started off really good, right? If you know the story of Martha, she was very hospitable. She opened up her home many times to Jesus. In fact, Jesus saw Mary, Martha, and of course Lazarus as his closest friends. So, you would think, wow, okay, Martha started off really good, but what does she do? She immediately goes somewhere else in her home, and it's Mary that goes to Jesus, and then she hears his word, and that just grips her heart. She's no longer concerned about what's going in the home, but what is Martha doing?

Let's continue: "But Martha was cumbered about much serving." Much serving—that's a good thing too, isn't it? There's nothing wrong with serving, because that's not what this text is about, that you should serve less, and we'll see that later on. But you'll see that she's immediately in her home—you can just picture in your mind, just busy, busy, busy: I got to do this, I got to do that. That's what you should sense, and we're familiar with this part too, right? And then we see that while she's in the busyness, this is what I want you to notice, and I want you to recognize in yourself: when you are busy, do you tend to do better work, or do you tend to do work that is not as good? Answer that question in your own mind, because I can tell you, when you're

busy and busy and busy, you tend to not do your best work. It's when you are still, when you're carefully thinking about what you're going to prepare, what you're going to do, that's when your best work is done. So, there is some of that here in the text, but there's even more than that.

So, she says, in her busyness, something that I don't think she would have said if she wasn't in the moment, busy. But there you see in the text, she's "cumbered about," and this is what she says to the Lord: "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." Okay, just pause there. How would you think Jesus would answer her? Better yet, think about what Martha was thinking when she asked that question. I think, in her flesh at the time, she probably thought, oh, Jesus will respond, Jesus would know what I'm going through, Jesus knows I'm serving, I'm doing all that I can in my situation. And in the heated moment, she says something that she shouldn't have, and we know that because the way Jesus answers. She does not get the answer she wants. How many times has that happened to you when you're busy, and you're just like, Lord, help me in this situation, Lord, I'm going through something very difficult, and you know what, I need your help right now, bring somebody, when really you need who the most in that moment? The person, the Lord Jesus Christ, right?

So, let's follow along in the story. Jesus answered and said unto her—notice the tone—"Martha, Martha," it's a compassionate tone. "Thou art careful and troubled about many things." That's the answer that she got. Just imagine what she would have felt after what Jesus just answered her with. I thought about it: how would I have responded if this is the answer I would get in my busyness? Yep, that's exactly what Jesus would tell me: "Thou art careful and troubled about many things." But he doesn't just end there, amen. He concludes with this—it's a transitional verse: "But one thing is needful." Pause there. What do you think is the one thing that's needful? You'll see the sentence doesn't just carry on; it's for us to think about. That's how this answer is posed; it's for you to contemplate. Listen to what Jesus just said; don't rush to the next thing. He's trying to slow Martha down, right, in the conversation. Have you ever felt that way when Jesus responds to

you, and you don't get the answer you want? Do you just quickly go, oh, he doesn't know what I'm going through? No, Jesus knows exactly what you're going through, and he knows how to give the right answer, amen.

And so, he says, look, he's not responding directly to Martha; he says, think about someone else, someone right next to you. And he says this: "And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Now, I want you to think about what I said at the beginning of my message: what is the one thing in your home that you think is the most valuable? Because the one thing that's most valuable, you think you're going to have it for a long time, hopefully. The thing that's valuable, you think, oh, it's going to last a long time, right? But this is why the word of God is the most valuable thing. It's how Jesus responds: "which shall not be taken away from her." This is a very weighty answer, something we often should come back to over and over and over again. It's not just a story that you read over and over again and go, I know that. Do you really know that? Do you really think about this over and over again? That's the kind of response that Jesus gives: "Martha, Martha, do you understand what I'm saying? Do you understand the weight of my answer, that what Mary is doing is going to last basically forever?"

Here's where I want you to go to: Psalm 27, verse 4, because it has this sort of—this is the cross-reference to this verse; it has the same feel. I'll read Psalm 27:4: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." Don't flip back too quickly to Luke, because I want you to see something here. Look at the phrase "to behold the beauty of the Lord." Have you ever thought about that verse? The context here, yes, it's talking about the temple, yes, it's talking about dwelling with the Lord, but what do you do when you're dwelling with the Lord? Are you beholding the beauty of the Lord? This word "beauty," another way of saying it is "delighting."

Where else have you heard that word from? Go to Psalm 1, and you're going to find here this word "delight." Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the

way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Hold on one moment there. I meant Psalm 1, starting with Psalm 1. Notice the progression of this blessed man: it is walking, standing, and then sitting. So, the context is essentially, he’s talking about the one that despises bad counsel, walking in the way of sinners, living like sinners, and sitting with the scornful. This word “scornful” basically means to undermine the word of God, that you treat the things of the world, the lies of the world, as more important than the word of God itself.

Okay, so in that context, look at verse 2: “But his delight is in the law of the Lord.” You see that? He’s not scorning the word of God; he’s delighting in the beauty of the Lord. “And in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” This is an amazing text that I often pray for myself and for others, because you will notice in the text that as you are meditating on the word day and night, because you cherish it, you find delight in it, you find it most precious, that the one that does that, he illustrates it as a tree planted by the rivers of water.

Now, we know that without water, trees will die, right? But trees have a progression, and so it’s a picture of a Christian that progresses in his Christian life. And how do you progress? It’s how much you meditate on God’s word, it’s how much you spend in His word that you grow. And, as you know, this is very important; this is what I want to get at: when you’re tested in the busyness of life, because we all are, right? Even when they say, “Oh, I’m retired now,” really, you’re probably still as busy, if not more. You got kids, and hopefully you got grandkids, you got activities that you didn’t get to do when you were working. I’m just talking about the grand scheme of things of busyness. This is how you can assure yourself that you are a child proud of God: no matter how busy it gets, you always insert in your time, in your life, the word of God, and you spend more time than you did when you started. Is that how your life is right now, where you are spending more time in the word of God as you have lived your Christian life?

Because if you don't, picture in your head a tree that grows taller and wider, then picture a storm, challenges in your life, a way of putting it. Depending on how strong that tree is, you'll be able to withstand all the storms in your life. And sometimes you might think you might not be ready—don't be worried, just keep being faithful, as God is faithful, as the one that is faithful. He is true; His character does not change. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. You can stand on the word of God, you can grow strong, and then when you start seeing not only the busyness but all of the cares, all the concerns, because they will come—deaths do come, don't they? Pain comes, don't they? Suffering comes—but this is why meditating on the word of God is so important.

So, flip back now to Luke, verse 42. I'm going to read this verse again with all that I said: "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, and shall not be taken away from her." When you start living this way, where you choose the better thing, the good part of your busyness of life, that above everything that has gone on throughout today, ask the question to yourself: has God's word stood the test of my life, all of the things that His word is true, that He's faithful, that He carries me through all the ups and downs of life? And I want you to think about one more thing here. Go to John chapter 12. This is kind of continuing the storyline of where we leave off in Luke. We read here in verse 1: "Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead." So, picture the story that we just read; this is before Lazarus' death, now he's been resurrected, okay? Jesus resurrected him, and now we go to the scene here, verse 2: "There they made him a supper; and Martha served." But we don't see anymore of Martha's busyness. Look at how it continues: "But Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him." Jesus gave Martha another opportunity to serve, but this time, Martha learned her lesson. But I want you to see even more—this is, again, the mercy and grace of God, right? Look at verse 3: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." This is what happens when you're devoted to our Lord

Jesus Christ: no longer do you see things as costly in your eyes, because you treasured Jesus more than anything in life. This was nothing to her, but in fact, in the world's eyes, this was a lot; this was a year's wage, okay? And she just—nope, Jesus is more important. Isn't that amazing? Nothing is too costly for serving the Lord in the right way. That's what we should learn about this.

So, I want to conclude with that. Like I said, this is something that is weighty, and I want you to go home, if you haven't really thought about this story in this way, reflect on it. Take the time to reflect on this story, because it has so much truth, so much meaning, so much practical lessons for you and me. So, may God increase His blessing on His word tonight.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank You for this very simple message, story of Mary and Martha. I pray, Father, that You would, wherever people are at in this room and those listening online, I pray that You would show them Your grace and Your mercy, that they would respond to this message such like Martha, learning the lesson, but more than that, like Mary, who saw from right away the beauty and delighting in the word of God, hearing it from the mouth of Jesus, finding that the most important thing that she can listen to. Every day, we have that opportunity, because Your word says that there are new mercies every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. Help us to cherish Your word tomorrow morning or whenever our devotion is, help us to let the word sink in, help us to meditate on Your word, and help us to ultimately delight in the Lord, and we'll thank You, in Jesus' name, amen.