

The title for today's message is: **Keep Focused On The One Thing Needed**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Often we find it hard to keep focused in the midst of distractions and therefore we cannot accomplish much.

Distractions can be dangerous, even a small distraction while driving a car can result in an accident or worse.

If a doctor becomes distracted while performing surgery, he could make a mistake, a mistake that could cost someone his or her life.

Staying focused on what you are doing is very important. The same is true of spiritual matters.

In our Gospel lesson for today we hear Jesus tell us to keep focused. Our Savior says to Keep Focused On the One Thing Needed.

This morning we have before us a very familiar portion of Scripture, the story of Mary and Martha. Now it would be extremely easy for us to criticize Martha.

Here she had a glorious opportunity to sit at the feet of the master teacher himself and she goes and gets herself all wrapped up in dinner preparations.

Martha allows herself to become distracted by earthly things instead of keeping focused on the one thing needed.

But before we come down too hard on Martha perhaps we need to ask ourselves two questions:

First, what would we have done had we been in her sandals? Secondly, do we ever do the same thing today?

So try to put yourself in Martha's place. There is a sudden knock on the door. It's Jesus! What an unexpected but always welcome surprise!

Martha who seems to be the eldest of the three siblings or at least the elder sister feels it is her duty to prepare a meal for her Lord and to make his visit in her home as comfortable and as restful as possible.

Hospitality, after all, was a hallmark of God's chosen people—especially for someone as dear and as important as Jesus!

So instead of "taking it easy," instead of just sitting at Jesus' feet and listening Martha decided to show her love and appreciation to Jesus by serving him.

While her choice was certainly not the best and she let earthly things distract her.

How many of us can say that we have never become distracted and lost our focus on the one thing needed.

If the truth be told, we have on many occasions been just as distracted by earthly things as Martha, perhaps without even realizing it?

Let me ask. How many of you prepare a list of things that need to be done? If we were to make a list right now, what would you put on that list?

If your list is like a normal household list you probably have items on the list like: mail bills, get the oil changed, pick up items from the grocery store, and so on.

Now that you have your list, go over it. What have you left off of it? Does it seem like something is missing?

How about items like: attend Bible class, spending time in prayer, family devotions and personal Bible study. Were any of these items left off your list?

Because of our sinful nature it is very easy to become distracted by earthly things. By nature we have little or no love for God and his word.

So naturally, we tend not to think about putting God and spiritual matters ahead of everything else.

Like Martha many of us today are trying to juggle a half dozen things in our life all at the same time.

We have our family. We have our work. We have our schooling. We have our friends.

We have our hobbies. And, oh yes, we have our personal relationship to our Lord.

How do we fit all of these things together? How do we allot the limited amount of time that we have?

Basically, we need to focus on the one thing needed, we need to keep focused on God and his word and everything else will fall into place.

To help us with this I would like to tie in our text for today with a picture that is given to us in Revelation chapter 3 v20.

In that passage of Scripture Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."

To whom did Jesus speak these words? Believers or unbelievers? Well you can be sure these words were not spoken to unbelievers.

These words were not spoken to people who didn't know that Jesus was their only Savior from sin.

These words were not spoken to people who had to decide whether or not they were going to open up their heart and allow Jesus to be the Lord of their life.

These words were spoken to Christians. Christians like you and me who have to confess that we have our priorities all mixed up.

Just like Martha, when Jesus knocked on her door she warmly welcomed Him in. Yet she quickly became distracted, keeping her from hearing God's word.

Well, my friends, in Revelation chapter 3 we are reminded that Jesus knocks on the door of our heart each and every day.

How do we respond? How do we react? Are we more like Mary or are we more like Martha?

Let me ask you this; Do the wilted flowers on the altar keep your attention instead of focusing on what the pastor is saying in his sermon?

We get distracted by earthly things, so distracted by the things of this world that somehow we forget that we are here to hear about what God has done for us.

We forget there is only one thing that is truly needed! And that one thing needed is to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to His Word!

Thankfully the Lord's love, care and concern for us runs just as deep as his love, care and concern for Martha.

Jesus told Martha, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her”

When Martha became distracted and lost her focus Jesus was there to remind her of what is truly important. The same is true for us here today.

When we become distracted with the things of this world, Jesus is there to remind us.

Only now, the Lord normally uses someone else to call out our name and remind us when we have lost sight of the one thing needed.

Sometimes the Lord may use our parents or our children to remind us that our church attendance or Bible class attendance is slipping.

Sometimes he may use a pastor or a fellow Christian. But his goal is always the same!

His goal is to invite us to hear his Word and to receive his holy Supper as often as we can so that our faith can be nourished and strengthened.

His goal is to invite us to talk to him about whatever is on our mind or heart so that we can be relieved of our burdens and receive rest for our souls.

His goal is to make us even more secure in the knowledge that our Savior not only loved us enough to die on the cross to take away our sins.

But he also loves us enough to be concerned about the every day things of our life.

So no matter what else is going on in our lives, no matter what else needs to get done.

We need to remember every day that there is only one thing needed and that is to come into contact with Jesus by coming into contact with his holy Word.

There may indeed come a time in your life when circumstances completely beyond your control compel you to choose between various things that are all important to you.

There are indeed times when you have to choose between where and how you will devote your time and energy.

But my prayer today is that when you make these choices you will do so in the context of your spiritual life, your personal relationship with your Lord and Savior.

I pray that you will prioritize your heart and your life in such a way that Jesus will always be able to say concerning you what he said concerning Mary here in our text:

"Only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her." May this be true of all of us.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.