

“Christians Have One Priority”

Luke 10:38-42

In **Luke 10:25-28**, Jesus is asked by a lawyer, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life.” Jesus confirmed that as a recipient of eternal life you would “Love the Lord your God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

The lawyer asked Jesus to define “who” his neighbor is, i.e., who specifically does he need to love as himself, in order to receive eternal life. Jesus then tells him the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the main point of which is, it doesn’t matter who our neighbor is, but instead what is required of us is to be a good neighbor by showing mercy to anyone who is need.

Eternal life is exemplified in the life of those who have been born-again by God’s Spirit, for God’s children will be gracious and loving to all people, without partiality, but especially to those who are in need of mercy, like the man in Jesus’ parable.

Today we are going to look at an event that took place in Bethany, at the house of Martha and Mary, where Jesus will teach us what our main priority is, i.e., what is the most important thing for God’s children to seek and to do?

Our world is very complex, and at times chaotic and confusing. We live in a society that is becoming more fractured and frantic day by day, people are more disconnected from one another than ever before; while, at the same time, people are much more connected to phones, computers, and other electronic devices.

Life in today’s culture has become more fragmented, as people find themselves involved in a wide variety of activities, pursuits, and responsibilities. People are struggling to prioritize the many facets of their lives, as they sort out which things are more important than other things.

When we talk about something being a priority, we are usually speaking of what we consider to be most important to us. The word “priority” is a form of the word prior which means ahead of, or preceding; something that comes before, i.e., the essential thing, that which is preeminent to everything else.

I imagine you could ask a dozen people on the street what their main priority is, and you would get a variety of answers. But as a Christian, what should your priority be? What is above all else, the most important thing in your life? Your wife? Your husband? Your kids? Your family? Your church? Your job?

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David tells us (**Psalm 27:4**), “One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: 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 meditate in His temple.” David desires to behold the beauty of Lord and to be in His presence forever!

Paul tells us (**Philippians 3:8-11**), “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Wow! Paul’s single priority is to know Christ Jesus as Lord and experience the power of His resurrection and eternal life.

Micah 6:8, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Look at Luke 10:38-42... This story appears nowhere else in Scripture, and yet it is a marvelous story that encourages us to take inventory of what our priorities are, as witnesses of Christ.

Why does Luke put this story in his narrative, where as, nobody else does? This section of Scripture begins the last six months off Jesus’ life on earth. Starting here, all the way to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus is on the road traveling through Judea, going from town to town and village to village proclaiming that He is the Messiah and that the Good News of the Gospel has come to them through God’s Son, the kingdom of heaven has come to earth.

Previously, Jesus sent the seventy disciples in teams of two, to prepare every town and village for His arrival. Some would believe His message and most would not. From **Luke 10:38** through **chapter Luke 19:28**, the focus of Jesus’ was His teaching, not miracles, in order to teach His apostles and disciples, preparing them to take the message of salvation to the ends of the earth.

As we work through the rest of Luke’s Gospel in the coming months, we will study the Lord’s teachings about demons, prayer, forgiveness, divine judgement, persecution and suffering, the Holy Spirit, stewardship, unity, humility, pride, and the kingdom of God; we will study about HIs death, resurrection, appearances to His followers, and His ascension back into heaven.

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From **Luke 11:1-24:53**, Jesus pours out His heart through His teaching, then pours out His life, as He becomes the once for all sacrifice for all sin, for all time. Jesus' teaching is urgent, powerful, and life changing, for all those who will hear, understand, believe in and receive Him as Lord and Savior.

It is interesting that in the study we did last week, we read the Parable of the Good Samaritan (**Luke 10:30-37**), that told us about four men who were going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and that is where the Samaritan took the man who had been beaten and robbed and left for dead.

In today's text, we are going to learn about Mary, who is commended for sitting at the feet of Jesus; while her sister Martha, doesn't take the opportunity to sit at Jesus' feet and hear the Word of God being spoken in her home.

God speaks through His Word, God's Son is the very Word of God (see **John 1:1-5, 14, 18; 10:27-30; 14:6-7; 15:15**).

The most important thing in the world is divine truth; and sadly, there are many Christians who don't understand just how important it is. My blessing as a pastor-teacher is to tell you what Jesus said and what He meant by what He said, and how it applies to us, today, and for as long as we shall have life on this planet.

Hearing the revealed Word of God precedes every other spiritual duty that we have as Christians, for everything we do is motivated by, informed by, and defined by Scripture. God's Word is the what, why, where, when, and how of God, by which we are to live our lives for Him, and to tell others about Him.

Back to Luke 10:38.... The name of the village is Bethany, and although it is not mentioned here, we know from **John 11:1**, that this is where Mary, Martha, and their brother Lazarus lived.

The name Martha means "mistress," not in the way we might think today, but as a feminine form of "master of the house," as she is most likely the oldest of the two and probably without a husband, since he is not named.

We are told that Jesus came to the house and was welcomed in by Martha, and so He is now either standing or sitting and Mary is sitting at His feet [lit., alongside, as close as she could get to Jesus]. Mary is captivated by Jesus, transfixed on every word He says. The Lord God was in her house, telling her of the things of God, nothing was more important to her than to hear what God was revealing to her. She was hungry for the truth, there was no greater priority in her life at this moment.

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Now Martha (**verse 40**) was, “distracted with all her preparations .” She was missing what was important, the Word of God was being proclaimed by the Son of God; but Martha was all caught up in her serving duties, and she was missing an opportunity to, like Mary, listen to the marvelous teachings from Jesus Christ.

Martha, getting agitated, came up to Jesus and basically said, “Don’t you see that I have all this cooking and cleaning and bed arranging to do, and Mary is just sitting here doing nothing!” “Tell her to help me!”

The Lord answers Martha (**verses 41-42**) saying, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

What does that mean? Jesus gives a sympathetic rebuke saying, “Martha, Martha,” if you have ever responded to a person in a situation with a repeat of their name, while probably shaking your head slowly, it kind of softens the blow of what needs to be said, as Jesus responds to Martha, who has missed what is really important.

Jesus is empathetic in His response to Martha, who Jesus says is, “worried [*unjustifiably concerned*] and bothered [*troubled*] about many things.” But the reality is that only one thing is necessary, i.e., there is only one priority here, and it is not cleaning, cooking and making beds, it is beholding the Son of God who is speaking the Word of God, revealing Himself to those who will but listen.

Jesus tells Martha He won’t take what is important away from Mary, the truth is, Martha needs to stop fussing and sit at Jesus feet like Mary, who has chosen the right priority, Christ the Lord!

Our lives can fill up with busyness; and we can get frustrated over stuff that just doesn’t matter in eternity: politics, the environment, health, wealth, power, even hospitality like Martha; we may wrongly commit ourselves to earthly things; when in reality we should commit ourselves to heavenly things, like Mary, worshipping Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Lord and Savior.

Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

February 18th, 2024 – (full sermon notes)

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Philippians 4:8-9, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Philippians 4:12-13, “I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:19-20, “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

As Christians, our greatest priority is to know, love, and serve God there and now, with whatever time we have remaining. We are to do this by encouraging our brothers and sisters in in the Lord, as we share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ with all those who will listen; while trusting God to take care of us, now and forever. And all of God’s children said, Amen!

Pastor Mike Hale

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