

Luke 10: 38-42; Psalm 16:5-8; Choosing the Better Way I. The Two Woman II. The Better Choice

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what is the most important thing that you will do today? A principle of the business world is this- if you set out to accomplish the most important thing first, you will have a productive day! Keep the first thing, first. At issue today is our need to prioritize- to pursue what is of utmost importance. There are many things that keep us busy- things that fill our day. We are busy at work, with our families and friends. We plan for vacations or retirement- and our minds can be distracted to say the least. How many moms don't feel like an events coordinator as they try to keep their kids busy and entertained this summer? Well, today we find Jesus refocussing our attention so that we remember to be busy with the most important thing- choosing the lifestyle that is better. In our context- as we saw two weeks ago- Jesus instructed us to be active Christians- to do good to those whom He has placed on our path. Today this calling for us to do good- to be a blessing to others- is balanced by the call to learn and rest at Jesus feet. For it is at His feet that we grow in grace and knowledge of the truth. So today we see that Jesus Christ instructs us to choose the better way and sit at His feet.

### **I. The Two Woman**

Luke begins by introducing two women- sisters- who have different responses to the presence of Jesus in their home. Mary and Martha were loved by Jesus- often accompanying Him in His journeys and providing for Him out of their generous hearts. Lazarus, their brother, and these sisters were present from almost the beginning of Jesus' ministry up until the very end- even seeing Jesus after He rose from the grave. Well known for their hope in Christ after their brother, Lazarus died- these sisters have a prominent place in the gospels as dearly loved and loving Jesus with all their heart. But as prominent as these women are- they are not perfect nor do they always have it right. So our text begins in v. 39 with Mary who is sitting at Jesus' feet. Sitting at the feet of the master was the position of a good student- a disciple of the Lord. Mary is taking to heart the words of Jesus- loving His teaching. During this short period of time- roughly a 3-year earthly ministry of Jesus- Mary is drinking long from the living water- feeding her soul with the life giving bread! Every word that proceeded from the mouth of the Lord was welcomed and cherished by this dear, younger sister. It would be like many a godly woman today- who

delight to hear God's Word proclaimed- taking sermon notes- meditation on God's Word- delighting in this heavenly manna. She is truly hearing- listening with her heart. She could say with Psalm 119- Oh how I love thy Law- above gold- above all else- I love your precepts and they are right! Your word is my meditation day and night. But there is another woman- Martha- not sitting but standing- evening running back and forth to get everything ready. As v. 38 opens- it is Martha that welcomed Jesus into her home. It is not every day that you can welcome the Son of Man into your house! This is a cause for celebration- and every celebration demands a feast! So she is busy- v. 40 says she is distracted. So busy with getting the bread, meat, vegetables and wine ready that she is being pulled in a thousand directions all at once. She tired to listen- but her thoughts kept wandering. How and I going to feed this many people? Is the meat prepared- are the vegetables cooked – how about the place settings- did the forks get put on the correct side of the plate? Have you ever sat through a sermon- but your mind was on something that was to come? Making plans for the day or the next week? Well, you have the Martha syndrome. She is as Jesus says in v. 41- filled with anxiety. This word- Mariomones- means that she is filled with care and concern. The same word Jesus uses in Mt. 6:28 to describe those who are concerned with clothing and food- worried about what we will eat and what we will wear. She is also troubled- throibazo- meaning stirred like water. The picture is here of water rushing over rocks- rapid and stirred. Her heart is in a tumult- like troubled waters. Getting everything ready she is overwhelmed, and seeing her sister just sitting there she lashes out. Now we can understand this- Martha sees Mary relaxed and composed- while she is filled with fret and care. She complains about her sister to Jesus- even complaining about the Lord's lack of concern as well. Don't you care- v. 40 says- that my sister doesn't care and is not helping? No one is helping me out here- and she is bitter towards those who are not working. To be fair, it is easy for those most active in the kingdom to complain about the work they are doing- and to become bitter towards those who do little. Why doesn't this other family help out- why do I need to do everything here? Why do 20% of the people have to do 80% of the work? As you know, we can all be divided and distracted in our daily callings. So many things- so many cares can fill our minds. We worry about the details- and we miss the forest for the trees. Notice- Martha wants to do something good- she wants to show hospitality- she invites the Master into her home. She desires to

feed and entertain this gracious teacher. She is trying to do good work- right? Well, in doing so she was missing the opportunity to grow in faith. It would be like inviting a visiting family into your home after church. To provide a Sunday meal for them, you become overwhelmed with the preparation of the food so that you begin to stress and fret- are the potatoes done, do they like roast, are the napkins folded correctly. During the whole meal you are busy serving- but you miss out on the fellowship and the joy of hospitality. Or it could be like a pastor who spend the whole week visiting the sick and shut-ins; responding to e-mail and chairing meetings so that he spends little time reading the Bible and praying. Good work can fill our day- so that we forget the best work- the most important thing is missed as we are preoccupied! We can fill our Lord's Day with many good things- but have we neglected the most important thing? Have we forgotten to sit at the feet of the master- to be fed by the hand of the Good Shepherd? Sometimes hotdogs and sandwiches are enough- so we don't miss the blessings of fellowship! If we don't fret the small stuff- we can focus on what is really important. Sometimes we lack the ability to discern the most important things.

## **II. The Better Choice**

In order to reorient Martha- Jesus gives a gentle, loving rebuke in v. 41. Martha, Martha- dear daughter of mine. You are busy with many things- good things- things that are commendable- but in the process you have overlooked the most important thing. Your sister has made the better choice. The meal can wait- now you should be sitting at my feet! Mary chose what was needed as v. 42 says- the one thing that was necessary. You see- a Christians we are called to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness as Jesus said in Mt. 6. Don't worry about food and clothing, the Father knows that you need these things! The one, primary duty of the Christian is to be a good disciple of Jesus Christ! To sit, listen and learn- this must be your primary duty and goal every day! To glorify God and enjoy Him forever- that is your chief end! The cares and concerns of this world must be put in their proper place. Here Jesus is reordering our priorities. We tend to get caught up in the less important things- to fill our day with the normal duties of this world so that we neglect or ignore what is most necessary- what is the best is to give God the first-fruits! To offer yourself to Him in the morning- with your

waking thoughts! Not the leftovers- but the best belongs to Him! That is the good part- and Mary had chosen the best portion. She could say with Psalm 16- the Lord is my portion and my cup! To have Jesus and His word is to have the best! To know Him, to fellowship with Him- is to have the highest good! And we know that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God! His words are useful for rebuking, correcting and training for righteousness- that we might be fully equipped for every good work and mature as II Tim. 3 says. We can fill our lives with so many good things- good projects and helpful works- that we never have the time and energy to sit at the Master's feet! This is choice- a decision that we all have to make. Mary chose the better way- the needed path- which leads to growth and spiritual maturity! The good portion that Mary chose is the portion of blessing, peace and life! To choose fellowship with Jesus- is to choose the healing balm of Gilead and the dew of Hermon that refreshes and restores our soul! In the midst of the business of life, we need to learn to come and sit at His feet- because He has the Word of life! When Jesus died on the cross for us, He opened the way for us- so that we might enter into the Land of peace and rest! Come you who are weary and heavy laden- come and sit at His feet and find rest for your anxious and troubled souls! Grace, mercy and peace- Shalom- are in His hands! And for those who look to Him in faith, theirs will be a lasting peace and joy- refreshment that will never be taken away!

To conclude, our passage today balances what we considered two weeks ago. We are to be like the good Samaritan- doing good- seeking to serve and being a blessing to others. But not at the expense of most important thing- and that is a thriving relationship with our Lord! In our busy lives we can miss the forest for the trees. In getting ready for a meal, we can miss the fellowship and the feast! Busy with doing good, we can miss the Best! Jesus loves the Matha's of our church- and He calls them to come, sit and be fed! As Psalm 27 says- One thing I desire- this is what I seek- that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord! May we never neglect the call to sit at the feet of our Master- may we never forsake the calling to learn from His Word!