

What Is MORE Important to YOU?

Sunday, 7/21 – 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 7/22 – 7 PM

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost / Fifth Sunday after Trinity – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: By the grace of God we know *the horrible* ☹️ and *the wonderful* 😊:

- ➔ *The horrible* includes these facts: We ♦are sinners, ♦deserve God's wrath, and ♦have no ability to escape.
- ➔ *The wonderful* includes these facts: God ♦took away the sins of the world through Jesus and ♦continues to shower us with His forgiveness through the means of grace (*Baptism, Bible, Absolution, and Supper*)!

Now, *as people who have the benefits of Jesus' saving work*, we are alive in **two ways** – *physically and spiritually*. We know that God ♦has given us life in our bodies and ♦will provide whatever we need during our time on earth. We also know that *physical things are temporary, while spiritual things are eternal*; therefore, we rightly understand that ♦physical things are important, while ♦spiritual things are MORE important! Also, it's one thing to *KNOW those realities*; it's another thing to *RIGHTLY EXPRESS THEM in our daily lives*! Now, let's think more about *temporal and eternal* things today as Jesus visits the home of Martha and Mary...

1. **The Setting:** ³⁸ **Now as they** [*Jesus and the many who were with Him*] **went on their way** [*continuing to travel toward Jerusalem*], **Jesus entered a [certain] village** [*the village of Bethany*]. **And a [certain] woman named Martha welcomed him into [the] house.** // The people

traveling with Jesus included the 12, the 72, some women, and possibly some other men. As they came near Bethany, *it seems that Jesus split off from the group and entered that village while the others went on* – possibly to Jerusalem, only about 1.5 miles away. Jesus, *already being a friend of Mary and Martha*, was welcomed by Martha into the house where they lived.

2. **Two Opposite Reactions:** ³⁹ ... [Martha] had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted [*drawn away*] with much serving [*possibly because she chose to prepare a very complex meal*]. // It seems that both Martha and Mary believed in Jesus as the Messiah, *the Christ*. Since He was in their home, they certainly wanted to provide for His physical needs – *but they also wanted to hear His amazing teaching!* We could presume that **♦Martha** did *all of the serving* while **♦Mary** did *all of the listening*; however, it is more likely that both were involved in the serving and in the listening – *though in different amounts*. Maybe initially they were both students – seated at the feet of Jesus, *their teacher*, and then Martha was *drawn away* to continue the serving. Whether it happened exactly like that or not, we can rightly say that – *at some point* – Martha chose to serve rather than to listen. Martha wanted to show her love to Jesus by serving; however, in doing so, *the serving became MORE important than the listening!*
Dr. Just put it this way: **“One shows hospitality to wandering missionaries in a variety of ways. One certainly provides for them... food... But the most fundamental part of the hospitality... is to receive and hear the preaching of the kingdom”** (Just, 458).

3. **The Complaint:** And [Martha] went up to [Jesus] and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? *[The question includes the Greek “οὐ,” which EXPECTS an affirmative answer; for example, “Yes, I do care.”]* **Tell her then to help me.”** // Martha believed that
♦she was fully right, ♦Mary should be helping her, and ♦Jesus would fully agree! We can also form strong opinions – *believing that we are right*; therefore, it is important for ALL OF US to †keep studying the Bible, †keep learning more and more, and †keep applying what we learn in our lives!
4. **The Unexpected Answer:** ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha *[voicing much love for her by saying her name twice]*, you are anxious *[distracted]* and troubled *[bothered]* about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary. [And] Mary has chosen the good *[better]* portion *[part]*, which will not be taken away from her.” // As Jesus spoke to Martha, He did express disapproval of what she thought was MORE important – *but He did so in a very kind and gentle way*. Then Jesus pointed Martha to what Mary thought was MORE important, *and said that she had chosen the better part*; it wasn’t a matter of ♦her choosing the bad and ♦Mary choosing the good; instead, her choice was good, *but Mary’s choice was better!* WHY? Martha’s choice was physical, thus temporary, *while Mary’s choice was spiritual, thus eternal!*
5. **Some Conclusions:**
- a. Right order: As saving faith always comes before genuine works, *so listening to Jesus should always come before serving Jesus!*

- b. Core: ^{NAS} **Romans 8:5-6** “...those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” [What is your core? Of the flesh – *focusing on temporal things!* Or of the Spirit – *focusing on eternal things!*] “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace...” So our core, *our saving relationship with Jesus*, makes all the difference!
- c. Examples: What is your choice?
- i. **SU**: Time with friends **or** Divine Service...
 - ii. **SU**: Time with family **or** SS/Bible Class...
 - iii. **At Home**: TV-watching **or** Bible reading...
 - iv. **When driving**: Radio-listening **or** Scripture memorizing...
- d. Lenski wrote: “Where [*the blessed, saving, soul-satisfying Word of Christ*] is chosen all else follows; where [*those things are*] set aside and neglected all else is useless, empty, deceptive, vain” (619).

This Week’s Challenge: Now that you know what is more important to you, what are you going to do about it?

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, TY for showing us that *eternal things* are MORE important than *temporal things*; now help us to reflect what is MORE important in our daily lives!

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