



TODD LEVIN MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

A monthly teaching publication to our partners and friends

ONLY ONE THING IS NEEDFUL

Dear Friends and Partners,

There are many things that people search for in life in hope of satisfying the hunger and desires that rise within their own hearts. Some seek fortune or fame while others look for acceptance or true meaning in life. As complex as our journey might seem, still we are faced each new day with real needs, valid concerns and life's questions that need answers. But where do we turn in the midst of all that is happening around us? And who should we believe anymore? In our high-speed society, people don't usually stop long enough to consider the outcome of their actions let alone slow down and enjoy the view. We've got to go! Keep moving! And whatever happens we do not want to stop! To me this clearly answers why so many are "stressed out," full of hyper-tension, and have medical issues associated with it. Not everyone has a "handle" on life nor have their "act" together as we say. You might though. And I pray that you do have your priorities in order, but in the case that you require some fine tuning, this teaching is for you!

Picture with me the scene just two days before Christmas – here you are at the mall shopping for last minute presents. The place is so crowded that you feel like one trapped in the middle of a herd of buffalo that are steering you in every direction except the one you need to go in. If this doesn't raise your blood pressure then how about the traditional family get together on Thanksgiving just a month earlier. Instead of it being that enjoyable, family fun time together, there you stand worried whether or not you'll have enough gravy for the potatoes and if the meat won't run out. Miraculously you managed to get through with lunch only now to find yourself surrounded with wall to wall dirty dishes and glasses all waiting to be washed. While everyone else is in the living room, there you stand alone in the kitchen shaking your head and thinking, "Why do I even bother. Year after year, it's always the same. I'm the one who gets stuck in the kitchen while everyone else is enjoying life." This reminds me of someone in the Bible who found their self in a similar situation. Let's look at it together.

"Now while they were on their way, it occurred that Jesus entered a certain village, and a woman named Martha received and welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary, who seated herself at the Lord's feet and was listening to His teaching. But Martha [overly occupied and too busy] was distracted with much serving; and she came up to Him and said, Lord, is it nothing to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me [to lend a hand and do her part along with me]! But the Lord replied to her by saying, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; There is need of

only one or but a few things. Mary has chosen the good portion [that which is to her advantage], which shall not be taken away from her.”

Luke 10:38-42 (AMP)

Jesus emphatically was trying to get across to Martha that, ***“man shall not live by bread alone but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*** (Mathew 4:4) Martha had concerned herself solely about lunch and had not taken any notice whatsoever of Jesus’ teaching. There was nothing wrong from Martha wanting to provide a nice lunch for her visitor but this was not just any ordinary man. This was the Son of God who had words of life. If Martha had been more interested in spiritual things then most likely we would have found her right beside Mary and at the feet of Jesus. Sometimes we get so concerned about what we consider to be the “proper thing to do” and in the end we sell ourselves short of what God wanted to do both in us and through us.

Let me give you an example: You promised your friend that you would meet them for lunch. This engagement was agreed upon two weeks ago. On the very day that the two of you should meet you happen to be running a little bit late. To make up for lost time you decide to take the turnpike as opposed to the back roads. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit who lives in you witnesses not to use the turnpike but stay with the back roads. What are you going to do? You’ve already played out both scenarios – “If I use the back roads, I will be at least 25 minutes late, but if I take the turnpike, I should make it on time.” The proper thing to do is to be on time – especially if it is within your ability. But remember only, ***“one thing is needful,”*** i.e., to hear God’s voice and obey it! It could be the difference between life or death.

Let’s take a closer look at this story in Luke chapter 10. Here we find two sisters who respected Jesus and his ministry. There came a day when Jesus dropped by for a visit. Of the two sisters, it was Mary who, ***“seated herself at the Lord’s feet and was listening to His teaching.”*** Notice she did not place herself next to or higher than the Master but rather at His feet. She knew that He had the words of life and she was ready, willing and eager to learn. Her spiritual hunger for the word of God was greater than her natural appetite for lunch. Thus we find her in the living room instead of in the kitchen with her sister Martha. It wasn’t everyday that Jesus stopped in to visit so Mary wanted to make the most of every minute and listen to His teaching. The very fact that Jesus was teaching in their house should be quite obvious that He had something important to say. But was it more important than food? Martha did not think so. Instead she spent the whole of her time in the kitchen, busy, occupied and ***“distracted with much serving.”*** And if that was not enough, her audacity shines forth as she bursts into the living room while Jesus was speaking and rudely says to the Lord, ***“Is it nothing to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me [to lend a hand and do her part along with me]!”***

Martha was no pushover but rather zealous and over confident. From the sounds of it, also a bit controlling! Now be honest, it’s not like she politely suggested to Jesus if her sister might help her but rather, ***“Tell her then to help me!”*** Sounds more like a command! So what’s wrong with this picture? Martha had a heart condition and I’m not referring to the organ. She was the type of person who was used to being on the go so much that she seldom sat down to rest – to be still – to ponder and meditate on the teachings of the Lord. She had her schedule to keep and no one was going to slow her down...not even Jesus!

Friend when you're so busy that you don't have time to meditate and read the bible or time to confess God's word then frankly you're too busy! It's interesting to note how we always seem to find time to do the things that we really want to do and manage to set everything else aside. We like to eat but don't like to exercise. We like to get paid but don't like getting up for work. And then there's TV. Do you enjoy watching the television? Has it replaced your personal devotional time with God? And please don't use the excuse of, "but its Christian TV that I watch." This was never meant to replace your prayer and devotional time with the Lord. It is meant to be a supplement and not a substitute. Supplement meaning – in additional to and not instead of.

The one thing that is needful for you as a believer is this:

To sit at the Master's feet and hear what He has to say.

Everything else in life is secondary and yet somehow we've managed to make everything else our priority. We seek prosperity instead of the Provider; we seek health instead of seeking the Healer; we search for things that can satisfy and ignore the Bread of Life. The enemy has people so confused that he has them looking in every direction except the right direction.

When the Lord responds to Martha He said, "***Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things.***" (Can you relate to this? Do you worry about many things? Do you have sleepless nights of tossing and turning because you're worrying about your children; worrying about the business meeting in the morning; worried of how you're going to pay the rent at the end of the week?) As was in the case of Martha, the Lord knows what you're going through today and what you're about to face tomorrow. And in light of all the "weight on your shoulders," He gently instructs you in the way that you should go. "***There is need of only one...thing.***" Or as the King James states only, "***one thing is needful.***" In this Jesus is referring to His teaching or as we know it– the Word of God!

The one thing that we all need in life is to sit at the Master's feet and as His disciple allow Him to instruct us by His Spirit and through His word. This as you know will not happen accidentally. You will have to set time aside and make Him and His word a priority in your life. Anything less than this would have to be considered lukewarm. Let me remind you what happens when we become lukewarm. Spiritual things become unclear to you. It's as though God speaks and you can't seem to hear or discern His voice. You are now "straddling the fence" as we say and can very easily tip over on either side. This is playing with fire and chances are you will be burned.

If the just shall live by faith and our faith is based on the word of God, then it would be scriptural to say, "***the just shall live by the word of God.***" It is God's infallible word which lives and abides forever. (**I Peter 1:23**) Therefore it would be to our advantage to build our life on the principles and promises of God's word.

Now listen in as Jesus concludes with his final words to Martha. Jesus says, "***Mary has chosen the good portion [that which is to her advantage], which shall not be taken away from her.***" In other words, "***Mary has chosen wisely. If it's between soup and salad or my eternal word, Mary has chosen that which is to her advantage.***" I like that don't you? You see friend,

no word of God is void of power. When you have the word of God, you have the advantage over the enemy and all life's challenges that you may ever face.

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”
Isaiah 55:11(KJV)

As soon as faith is mixed with God's word it will produce tremendous results. (Mark 5:34, 36; Hebrews 4:2) As we decide to invest time in the word and invest the word into us, then we have an advantage over the enemy. Why? Because it was the Word which defeated him 2000 years ago and it's the same Word that enforces his defeat today!

I don't know how you're feeling right now or what you may be going through, but I can tell you for certain that it would do you good to make a point today to sit at the Master's feet and listen closely to what He is wanting to say to you. This is the **one thing that is truly needful**. Consider everything else secondary – not unimportant – just less important in light of hearing God's voice and God's word. Remember you won't die just because you miss a few meals here and there but you could go home prematurely by not placing your ear to the mouth of God, i.e., overlooking a God instruction. Is it worth the risk? I don't believe so. Life is too short on this earth to take it in our own hands and call all of the shots. People need the Lord and so do I. The Lord is waiting for you to invite Him in today. He wants to talk to you.

“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.”

Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

I realize that this verse has been used often in preaching evangelistic crusades, but when you consider **who** the message was actually addressed to in the book of Revelation, it actually is more serious than we may realize. To get the full impact, read the previous verses. ***“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”*** Revelation 3:14-16 (NIV)

God was speaking to the church! Remember, no one backslides over night. It usually happens slow and progressively. Here in Revelation we see Jesus “locked outside” and wanting to come in and visit. The Laodicean believers had become so busy and preoccupied with their self indulging schedules and lifestyles that they left no room for God. Remember they did not start out this way. However due to negligence on their side they were about to be rejected by God. This is sad yet possible if we allow things to get out of hand. Let these words of Christ ring loud and clear in your heart today friend – ***“Only one thing is needful.”*** Listen to what he is saying to you and then do it!

Your Friends and Partners,

Todd + Eva

