Doing What Matters Most
Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)

Please turn with me in your Bibles to our scripture text this morning in the Gospel of Luke, chapter ten, and let's read verses 38-42.

Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)

38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’[a] feet and heard His word.

39 And Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

P R A Y E R

I N T R O D U C T I O N

As a boy I grew up under the preaching of my dad. And one thing I remember hearing dad say many times from the pulpit was this:

“The problem with many Christians is that they major in minors and minor in majors.”
What dad meant by that was many of us have a problem getting our priorities straight in the Christian life. Many of us get so wrapped in doing the things that matter most to us........while neglecting to do the things that matter most to JESUS.

We see a perfect illustration of this in today's scripture text.

**BACKGROUND TO THE TEXT**

Jesus had three dear friends who lived in the little town of Bethany. Their names were Lazarus, and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. They all lived together in the same house, which according to verse 38, was owned by Martha, the older sister.

The town of Bethany was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. It was just about a mile and half from Jerusalem, or about “a half hour’s walk.” Bethany was in very close proximity to the Garden of Gethsemane and Golgotha's hill.

Martha's home became a convenient place for Jesus and His disciples to stay any time they came to Jerusalem for a special feast day or some other occasion.

In our text, Luke gives us the account of one such visit.
First of all, I would have you to notice........

I. Martha's DILEMNA (vs. 38-40)

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she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. 

39 And Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

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1. There is no indication from the text that Martha had any advanced knowledge that Jesus would be coming to her house that day. And notice, Jesus wasn't alone.

v.38 says, “Now it happened as THEY went that He entered a certain village.”

Who are “they?” They are the disciples.

2. So get the picture here. Martha hears a knock on her door. When she opens the door she sees thirteen men standing there. And not just any men, this was Jesus and His twelve disciples. These are the most honored guests anyone could ever have show up at one's house.

3. Martha has a huge smile on her face as she warmly welcomes Jesus and His men inside her house. But in her mind, Martha is about to have a panic attack. Isn't that how you women would feel if all the sudden thirteen dear friends showed up at your house?
4. There are two statements in our text that give us a clear indication of what was going through Martha's mind:

   v. 40  "But Martha was distracted with much serving."
   v. 41  "She was worried and troubled by many things."

5. There were a thousand thoughts racing through Martha's mind:

   "How does the house look?"
   "Do I need to straighten up the living room?"
   "Is there a place for everyone to sit?"
   "Will they see the dust on my oil lamps?"
   "What am I going to fix for all these people to eat?"
   "Do I even have enough food to feed thirteen guests?"

6. And so with a long mental list of things to do, Martha excuses herself from the room and diligently dives into the tasks at hand.

7. Her sister, Mary, on the other hand obviously didn't feel the same sense of "urgency." In fact, none of those seemed to be on her mind.

   v. 39  "And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word."
8. It is interesting to note Mary is mentioned three times in the Gospels, and all three times she is seen at “the feet of Jesus.”

   (Luke 10:39; John 11:32; John 12:3)

9. Here in Luke 10, some have suggested that Mary was actually washing the feet of Jesus and His disciples, which was a common practice in that culture when guests came to your house.

   But there is nothing in the text that indicates that. In fact, the text is very clear. It tells us “Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet listening to His word.”

10. So get the picture here:

    Martha is “stressing out” in the kitchen. She wants everything to be just right for her honored guests. She’s setting the table...........and baking bread........and roasting the meat........and fixing the vegetables, coordinating everything so it all gets done at the same time so she can serve it hot.

    And while Martha is “stressing out”........Mary is “sitting at the feet of Jesus.”

    You have Martha's diligence VS. Mary's devotion.

    You have Martha's hard word VS. Mary's holy worship.

    Martha's thinking, “I must do everything I can FOR JESUS.” While Mary is thinking, “I must spend time WITH JESUS!”
11. Well after running herself ragged in the kitchen, Martha’s patience finally runs out. She bursts into the room where her guests are all gathered, and notice she vents her frustration on Jesus, not her sister.

v. 40b “LORD, do You not care that my sister has left me alone? Therefore tell her to help me!”

Now notice............

II. The Master’s DECLARATION (vs. 41,42)

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

1. Sometimes when we read the words in the scripture we don’t get a sense for the tone those words were spoken in.

2. Jesus is rebuking Martha, but not for the work she was doing, but because of her attitude. And He doesn't do it in a harsh way, but rather He rebukes her tenderly.

Notice Jesus spoke her name twice, “Martha, Martha.” Not “MARTHA! MARTHA! (in a hateful, harsh tone) but “Martha..........Martha” (very tenderly) You are worried and troubled about many things.”
3. In essence here is what Jesus was saying to Martha:

“I know you’re in there working yourself to death trying to get a meal for me, and I know everything is going to be delicious, and I am deeply grateful for all the hard work you are doing for Me.”

But Martha, do you know what would mean the most to Me would be for you to stop what you’re doing and come in here and spend time with Me like your sister.

That is the one thing that is needed.......that is the one thing that pleases Me more than anything.......just come and spend time with Me.......get to know Me better.......spend time listening to what I have to say........spend time learning from Me.

**Application**

There’s a valuable lesson in this for all of us.

Many of us are like Martha. We are so distracted......so preoccupied with the cares of life......we neglect to do the one thing that matters most and that is to spend time with Jesus each day.

How many times is our daily time with Jesus interrupted by “the urgent?”

* I've got work to do!
* I've got an appointment to keep!
* I've got a research paper to do!
* I've got phone calls to make!
* I've got errands to run!
* I've got groceries to get!
* I've got meals to prepare!
* I've got chores to get done!

And the list just goes on and on and on..............
And some times we can even allow ourselves to be so preoccupied with **OUR SERVICE TO THE LORD** that we neglect **THE ONE THING THAT IS NEEDED MOST!**

We can get so caught up in attending Church services.......and attending board meetings and ladies meetings and Bible Studies.......and preparing Sunday School lessons.......and preparing sermons.......and doing good deeds for others........**THAT WE NEGLECT THE ONE THING THE LORD DESIRES MOST FROM US AND THAT IS TO SPEND TIME WITH HIM.**

Here is the point of the whole message, so listen very carefully: Jesus is much more concerned with what you do **WITH HIM** than what you do **FOR HIM.**  *(repeat)*

Jesus appreciates all our hard labor for Him. He appreciates all our Christian service, and one day He promises to reward us for our service. But Jesus wants us to understand that the more than all our service, He desires our time! He desires that we get to know Him..........He desires that we sit at His feet each day by immersing ourselves in His word and learning from Him. **That is the one thing that is needed most!**
CONCLUSION

A Letter From Jesus

I just had to write to tell you how much I love you and care for you. Yesterday, I saw you walking and laughing with your friends; I hoped that soon you'd want Me to walk along with you, too.

So, I painted you a sunset to close your day and whispered a cool breeze to refresh you. I waited and you never called. I just kept on loving you.

As I watched you fall asleep last night, I wanted so much to touch you. I spilled moonlight onto your face- trickling down your cheeks as so many tears have. You didn't even think of me; I wanted so much to comfort you.

The next day I exploded a brilliant sunrise into a glorious morning for you. But you woke up late and rushed off to work- you didn't even notice. My sky became cloudy and My tears were the rain.

I love you. Oh, if you'd only listen. I really love you. I try to say it in the quiet of the green meadow and in the blue sky.

The wind whispers My love throughout the treetops and spills it into the vibrant colors of the flowers. I shout it to you in the thunder of the great waterfalls and compose love songs for bands to sing for you.

I warm you with the clothing of My sunshine and perfume the air with nature's sweet scent. My love for you is deeper than the ocean and greater than any need in your heart. If you'd only realize how I care. I died just for you.

Please come to Me. Spend time with Me. Get to know Me! I will be waiting!

Your Friend,
Jesus