

6<sup>th</sup> Week of Pentecost Sermon  
July 16/17, 2022

The history of the world sees people repeating the unlearned lessons given by living life. There are those who take advantage of others and those who have hearts which willingly serve others. The greedy take and the hard-working find what they have earned taken. Jesus teaches us to place our trust in His provision which can never be taken from us. Indeed, though we are blessed and I pray the blessings continue, yet in the pale of history there is the oft repeated story of what has been accumulated being squandered. We go from being free to live life and then carried away into captivity by those who plunder. Such was the time of Amos. We can run in many different directions, but I would like to take you down a trail of thought of thinking upon these things in terms of what the Lord will teach us if we are willing to learn.

The Martha's of this world are diligent and busy. Thank You Jesus for all of the Martha's in this world. Sometimes, however, we need those who are willing to sit at the feet of Jesus, be still, and learn. Those who meditate, ponder, and seek the wisdom which the Lord offers. In part, this is why we have pastors. They are to be those who meditate, ponder, and help us seek the direction of the Lord, especially in times where we are unsure. Where our hearts are, there our treasure is going to be. There is an order of things and if we look to the Lord, we will find that we are led by Him in the right way and in the way of righteousness.

The hope of our salvation is in the truth that because Christ was raised from the dead, we too shall have a new life because we have been united with Christ through our baptism, both on the cross, and in His resurrection. This mystery is hidden from the unbelieving and although it is offered to all, it is given only to as many as believe. There is a qualifier in faith. If you have faith in Christ, then you will act upon that faith and live, that is, believe these things and see your life conformed to Christ in every way. If, and I do mean if, it is appointed that we undergo suffering as many of the faithful in the past have undergone suffering, then count it as all joy for the privilege of suffering for Christ. The unbelieving will lament and ask, "Where is God?" He is always with us and, in the example of Christ, we know that those who have a good-time religion will abandon God as fast as the money runs out of their pockets. To think of God as some kind of cosmic Santa Claus is heresy.

Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus were loved by the Lord. In today's story, we see the family dynamics and Martha complaining to Jesus, having been distracted by so many tasks. You know, it is an interesting thing, but no matter how busy I am, sometimes, if there is someone who wants something and you're not right there for them at that moment, they complain that you are worthless. It does not matter how much you do, only that you were not there in the moment they wanted you to be there. That is a sin issue, by the way. Jesus makes that quite plain in today's lesson. There is a time and place to take the time and spend it with the Lord. Just think about how many people have all kinds of excuses as to why they will not come to worship. There certainly are many good reasons and it is not these I am talking about, but those who make excuses rather than to humbly come before the Lord regularly and faithfully. But lest I sound like Martha, let us continue with what Jesus will teach us.

Consider the simple words of Jesus. "The better part will not be taken away." Now think about all of the *stuff* our world heaps upon us. Be healthy! Well, we are all going to die, so that is not something we can cling to. Mind it along the way, yes, but it is fleeting. Having the best of stuff? You know, I spend a lot of time fixing things. Why? Because things break. And I too have said the words, "They don't make things like they used to." It is just that as I get older, the

amount of time I've had something seems shorter. If something breaks after twenty years, well, you've had a pretty good run. And yes, there is a lot of junk out there these days. In either case, one cannot place their hope in the stuff of this world. Most of it will be gone in one hundred years. Entertainment? Well, it's entertaining, but fads come and go and today's celebrities are long forgotten tomorrow. Ask someone younger about Tiny Tim and you just might get someone who thinks that is the character in the story, Scrooge. But, I was thinking of the obnoxious and ugly singer, a one hit wonder, "Tippytoe through the tulips."

In God's realm, forever means forever. That which lasts forever is of and from the Lord. It is not that we are to become so altruistic that we give no care in this world, but that we do not lose sight of what it is Christ has come to do. The Savior of our souls has come to take away our sins. One at a time, He will blot them out of us. He has come to conform us to His image, that is, in the image of a child of God. He has come to make us holy even as He is holy. He has come instill in us a godly character. This is done step by step in the moments of our every day life. Sometimes we will need to be busy like Martha, but we are warned not to become so consumed with what we must do that we forget the better things which Jesus will give us if we will humbly submit and accept what He is offering.

Christ has reconciled us through His own sacrificed flesh so that we may be reconciled to one another. Christ has knit us together as one body, the church. But, as those distracted from the truth of His revelation, we have often taken every excuse to become upset, disunified, and unwilling to work together. There is a simple rule that is good for every fellowship: what we do is nowhere as important as that we do it together. We have been brought together as a family. We see the family of Martha and Mary – and they knew how to be fractious – and Jesus reminds us of what Scripture has taught us, that there is a season for everything under heaven.

Our goal then, is to help one another to mature in the faith we have been given. The education of Christianity is something that takes a lifetime. It is not a matter of a few bible studies, a confirmation class, and then a graduation certificate. It is a matter of each day becoming more like Christ. It is learning how to be holy, not just in moments, but knowing that in eternity you will be holy. That is why it is good to ask yourself the question, "How is my walk with Jesus going?"

As I meditate upon what I have learn over the past four decades of training for and becoming a pastor, I think of the now very obvious trends I have seen. This world has become phenomenally distracted by constant busy-ness. In a general trend, as people are more distracted and, as we have seen, less prone to think of things in spiritual terms. We seem to have bought into the lie of this age that we are just physical beings. Scripture tells us that we are indeed physical – and God declared our creation good – but also that we are spiritual beings. In fact, we are told by Jesus that God desires those who will worship in spirit and in truth. Knowing there are physical reasons for some of the maladies in this world, I suspect there are many spiritual issues that are being ignored. The anxiety and depression which is spiritual cannot be dealt with through medicine, but only by the cure which comes by faith through grace. I do not mean to sound meta-physical, only that there are many spiritual issues going on in our time. The way to make a greater discovery is to come sit at the feet of Jesus. If you need a doctor, then go to a doctor. If your soul is troubled, come to the Great Physician, our Savior Jesus. There is no magic fix, just the salvation of Christ which comes to us each day anew. Learn the better portion and take time to be at Jesus' feet and learn from the author and finisher of Your faith. Amen.