

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹ **"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,**

⁴² **but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."** (NIV)

INTRO - Most of you know of the unique Alaska program to share the blessings of our states wealth of natural resources, the program called the Permanent Fund Program. Every resident of the state can receive a check from oil money if they fill out an application. I have seen estimates in the paper that this year's check will be over \$1500. But, a person needs to apply and provide proof of their residence. And there is a deadline. If you apply after March 31 you have missed your opportunity.

I. In our lesson, Martha missed an opportunity, one that Mary took to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to him.

A. Have you ever said, 'When I get to heaven I want to ask Jesus . . .whatever.'

1. Here was an opportunity for Martha to listen to Jesus talking, teaching, explaining, encouraging . . . in her own home!
2. But, for Martha, that day at least, preparing a meal was more important, so she missed an opportunity many want, few ever had.

B. It is worse than that, after Martha complains, not about missing this opportunity, but complains about Mary not helping with the meal, Jesus says, ⁴¹"**Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things,** ⁴²**BUT ONLY ONE THING IS NEEDED. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.**"

1. Have you ever thought about what is absolutely needed in your life?
2. Sociologists will say, food, shelter, clothing, even relationships in this world are necessary. But all those will pass away with this world.
3. Since this world is passing, since eternity is the ultimate reality, since we are sinful people who only *deserve God's punishment*, only one thing is necessary to receive eternal life.
 - A. That one thing is a Savior, and in love, God sent His son into the world to die for our sins, and to rise again.
 - B. Receiving that Savior, Jesus, the Son of God comes through faith, through believing.
 - C. Was Martha missing not just Jesus' words, but the one thing needed, the one thing necessary? To an extent Jesus says she is!
 - D. What a tragedy that could be.

II. Please note this situation where Martha missed Jesus, it is instructive to us.

A. Did Martha miss this opportunity because of a great battle for Martha's soul, where she gave in to doubt, or fear, or sin? Did she fail like Peter when he was betrayed?

1. No, this was a normal everyday situation where Martha had a choice. Do I choose the Lord, and His nourishment for my faith, or something else.
2. Martha had even chosen what she thought was right, serving the Lord a meal.
3. You might say that in an everyday situation Martha chose an important opportunity to serve, but in choosing the important, she missed the necessary, and she didn't ever realize it until Jesus pointed it out to her.

B. So, when have you missed Jesus?

1. When have you missed sitting at His feet and listening, like Mary did?
2. When have you missed receiving the Savior who is necessary to eternal life?
3. When have you missed the practical help, strength, guidance, joy that our Savior brings to today's life?

III. There are two main reasons I see from today's lesson that we miss Jesus, and miss his word, and comfort, and faith, and the love we need to make it through the day.

A. First, many will say, 'Well, Jesus came to Martha's house, Mary's house, but He doesn't come to me like that.

1. Jesus comes to all of us in many ways.
 - a. Let me remind you that one of Jesus' names is 'Immanuel - God with us.'

B. Jesus told his disciples, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.'

C. Jesus told his disciples, and he tells us, 'I am with you always, to the end of the earth.'

2. Jesus comes to us today.

A. As we 2 or 3, or 100 or 200 gather together for worship today, Jesus is here. Have you heard his word, or missed him.

B. Jesus is present as The Word, and we receive Him as we listen to the Word. It is one thing for the Word of God to be read in our presence, it is another thing to listen, and we receive Him.

C. Jesus is here today in the people around you, 'As much as you have done this to the least of these brothers of mine, you have done it to me.' You have an opportunity to acknowledge Jesus' undeserved love, with undeserved love to those around you.

D. Jesus is here today, as 3 young boys are baptized, and the words of Peter echo saying, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

B. Secondly, often we miss our Lord, not because we fail in the big struggles, but because we fail to see him in the little things.

1. Every morning my goal is to start the day at the feet of my Lord, in Bible reading and prayer.

Thursday morning I had a church meeting at 7:00 a.m. I was up at 6:30 as Kathy went to work, but somehow I never got my reading done before. I missed that little opportunity of receiving the necessary love of Jesus, in order to do the seemingly important work before me.

2. But, perhaps Friday, we caught an opportunity. Pastor Denny Neels from Homer showed up unexpectedly in my office Friday noon, and wanted to go to eat. After finishing some work we went, and I knew the waitress sort of. She was rushed, and as we went to pray we asked, should we pray for you? She stopped, surprised, and then almost feebly said, 'Yes, please do. I need it.' Jesus was there in that person, in that moment. We could have missed him again.

III. I want you to know one more piece of Good News. This was not Martha's only chance, and she missed what was necessary and never had another chance.

A. After this story, just before Jesus was crucified, Martha's brother Lazarus died, and Jesus came to her and said, 'Your brother will live.' **Jesus told her, 'I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believe in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'** Do you know **Martha's answer?** In John 11:27, as Jesus has come to Martha, she replies, "**Yes, Lord I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.**" She didn't miss him this time.

B. If you have missed Him, there are other opportunities for what is necessary. He'll keep coming. But, will you sit with Mary and listen to His Words of love, and life and faith?

CONCLUSION - Do you have a Palm Pilot? A day timer? A calendar? Do you have a list of items to do on your calendar? Do you have anywhere on your list, sit at the feet of Jesus and listen? Jesus and His Words are life. Jesus and His words bless our lives.

My prayer today is not that everyone remembers to turn in their permanent fund application on time. Somehow that is never a problem. I pray that God may open your eyes to the many ways that He comes to you, and that you find joy in sitting at His feet.