

One Thing Is Necessary

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Date: 17 September 2023

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[0 : 0 0] All right, we are the church. Have y'all figured that out by now? Amen. Amen. We've been talking about it for a few Sundays now. If you'd like to ever get caught up on the series we're doing in church, you can visit at FBC Henrietta on YouTube and see all of our sermon videos there.

We are going to be in Luke chapter 10 today. Luke chapter 10, if you want to get a jump on it and start turning that direction. And later we'll head over to Revelations chapter 2. But today we're going to start in Luke chapter 10. We're talking about ecclesiology, big word that means the doctrine of the church. We get that term ecclesiology from the Bible word for church, which is ecclesia, meaning a called out assembly or gathering of people. And so we've nailed down a couple of statements that we want to weave into the very fabric of our church as a body of believers and Jesus followers. And here's a couple of statements that we've been talking about for the last several weeks. Make sure this is working here. I don't know if I did that or y'all did that. Here we go.

All right, let's read it together. Ready? Statement number one, we don't just go to church. We are the church. Let's try it one more time. Ready? We don't just go to church. We are the church. That's right.

Now we do go to church, right? Definitely. But we don't just go to church. We realize that we are as the people, the church. And then secondly, here we go. Ready? Begin. The church is not about me.

Who's the church about y'all? It's about God. That's right. So the church is not about me. Those are two great statements to add into or weave into the fabric of our church. Let that become a part of who we are as a church, as a body of believers. We are the church. The church is not about us. Isn't that interesting? Even though we identify as the church, we understand that the church ultimately is not about us. We are the church, but the head of the church and everything that the church should revolve around and bring glory to is Jesus Christ. So that's where we are when we go to Luke chapter 10 this morning. Luke chapter 10, beginning in verse 38. How many of you guys have heard the story of Mary and Martha before? Yes, very many of you. Well, we're going to tie it directly into our study of the church this morning. And so let's pick it up in verse 38. I'm reading from the Christian standard

[2 : 4 8] Bible should be very similar to what you have in front of you. Verse 38. While they were traveling, Jesus entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary. Now these two women were the sisters of Lazarus and they were longtime friends probably of Jesus since they had all kind of grown up in this area of Nazareth. And he had known them for many, many years. He was close with this family. And so there's more to the story than just what we're reading here of Jesus entering these random people's home. These were old friends. And so she had a sister named Mary who also, watch this, sat at the Lord's feet, sat at Jesus' feet and was listening to what he said. Verse 40. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks. And she came up and asked, Lord, why don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand.

Anybody ever been there before? Anybody ever said, seriously? I could use a hand here, but you're just all just going to leave me to do all of this?

It's kind of the tone we get from Martha here. Verse 41. The Lord answered her, Martha, Martha. You are worried and upset about many things, but one thing is necessary. One thing is necessary. Mary has made the right choice and it will not be taken away from her. I want to draw your attention to that statement highlighted here.

One thing is necessary. Folks, our lives can be about all sorts of different things. We can get wrapped up and consumed with all kinds of things, even as church attenders, even as what people would call church people. Everybody ever been called a church person?

It is so easy, even when you're trying to serve God through your local church, to get wrapped up and consumed with so many different things.

[5 : 14] And I think Jesus wanted to bring Martha's attention back to this truth. And I think He included it in the canon of Scripture because He wanted to bring our attention back to the truth that only one thing is necessary. Now that one thing will manifest itself in all kinds of ways in our individual walks with God.

But one thing is necessary. Mary figured out what it was. Sitting at Jesus' feet, learning from Him. And that cannot be taken away. So today, we're looking at this idea that one thing in the life of our church, as believers and followers in Jesus, as we attend our church, as we try to serve our church, as we go out in our community, as we lead our families in all the facets of our day-to-day life, one thing is necessary. Let's pray together.

Lord, we thank You that You are good. We thank You that You are great. That You're always right. Lord, we thank You that we can go to You. We can lean on You. We can lean into Your teachings. We can apply them directly.

And we know that we will always find rest. We will always find help. We will always find grace and mercy. I ask that You would shower our hearts with grace this morning. Help us to understand the reading of Your Word and apply it directly to what You would have for us this morning.

We know that no one walked in these doors in vain. We ask that Your Word, Your living, breathing Word, would apply directly to us, that we would not miss something that You have for us. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[7 : 00] Amen. All right. So looking back here at verse 41 in Luke chapter 10, And the Lord answered, Martha, Martha, Martha. Now this is a term of endearment. All right. As you look through Scripture and you kind of study back around the times, that was a way of a term of endearment to someone. You'll sometimes read in Scripture where they said, Lord, Lord, someday when we all stand before Jesus, there will be some who called themselves Christians here on earth. There will be some who were faithful in church attendance and went on and kind of try to act like a Christian and pose like a Christian and say, yeah, I follow Jesus. And they'll stand before God someday and say, Lord, Lord, I did all these things in Your name. And God will look at them and say, I never knew You. Why? Why is that?

Because those people never did the one thing, the one thing that was necessary. And that was putting their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Becoming a child of God, a true child of God.

And so as they try to use that term of endearment with God, He will actually reject them in that day. But we see Jesus using this term of endearment here with Martha. And so as He is correcting her, He's trying to do it in as gentle a way as possible. And that is how we should interact with one another.

Sometimes in the life of a church, believers will have to go to one another and have to say things that maybe are kind of corrective in nature. They're, you know, admonishing behavior that shouldn't be this way and trying to encourage them and lead them toward behavior that would be different.

Now, those are unique situations and you don't need to take that word from me this morning and go around and try to fix everybody and all their problems around you. That's not at all the takeaway from that. But when we do this, we should couch it in as gentle a terms as possible, use it compassionately and try to encourage one another in love as Jesus did. And so as He's teaching Martha a valuable lesson here, He says, Martha, Martha, immediately disarming her, putting her at rest, using that term of endearment. And then He says, you're worried, you're troubled, you're upset about all these different things. And I get it. I understand.

[9 : 22] But there's only really one thing that's necessary. He's simplifying it for her. And I think He wants to simplify it for us today. A mentor of mine always said this, said, ministry is not complicated, but it is difficult. It's not complicated, but it is difficult.

salvation is not complicated, but it is difficult because you have to put your faith in someone that you can't see. You have to believe in what you read in the word of God. It's not complicated.

Now, man-made religion really tries to complicate it, right? They'll come up with all these extra hoops you have to jump through and all these commandments you have to follow and all these kinds of things. When you, you know, walk in a variety of different churches across this country and around this world, as I've done and many of you have probably done, you'll see all these extra things that men have added on to the one way of salvation, which is putting your faith in Jesus.

And sometimes I think that's a way of complicating it so it becomes easier to attain. Because if I can just do all these things, then I don't necessarily have to put my faith in Jesus, right? Because that's a lot harder to actually do. But Jesus says, no, the way of salvation is straight. It doesn't have all these curves, but it is narrow. Not a whole lot of people will be able to actually walk that road.

And so I encourage you, every one of you this morning, I'm talking to people who are new faces in the room and I'm talking to people who are very, we're very used to seeing here in the room, every single one of us. You stand before us and we believe that you're a Jesus follower. We believe that you're a Christian by your own testimony. But when you stand before God someday, he'll know.

[11 : 18] He'll know. Make sure you're on that road. Make sure you genuinely put your faith in Jesus Christ because that's the only thing necessary for salvation. All right. And so one thing is necessary. And he said, Mary made that right choice. It was so easy for Martha to get distracted by all the other things that were good things. We're not talking about Martha going out and pursuing all the lusts of her flesh, going out and doing all kinds of wrong things and breaking all kinds of commandments. That's not what he was talking about. She was trying to be a good host. She was trying to take care of Jesus' physical needs. But let me tell you something, folks, the spiritual always trumps the physical for Jesus.

Jesus. The heavenly always trumps the earthly for Jesus. Mary got it. And she wasn't lording it over her sister. She wasn't saying, why are you in there trying to do all that stuff when you should be sitting here with me at Jesus' feet? Well, that wasn't, that wouldn't be the right spirit, would it?

But that's not what Mary was doing. Mary was just so focused on who she realized was her savior. And Martha missed it. And so Jesus is very gently trying to say, one thing is necessary. Mary figured that out. She made the right choice and it will not be taken away. So the takeaway that we have, it's in your bulletins this morning, don't let what is secondary become primary. That's another one of these statements that I pray will weave itself into the fabric of our church, become a part of the life of who we are, who we identify as followers of Jesus. Don't let what is secondary become primary.

That's going to pop up in all kinds of ways in the life of our church. It's going to pop up in all kinds of ways in your life. Satan will try to distract you from the best with what is good.

You understand the difference there? He'll take things that are good and get you so wrapped up in that, that you'll miss what is best. Jesus has only the best in mind for us. That doesn't necessarily mean that your bank account is going to look as best as it possibly could. It doesn't mean that every day is going to go as best as you think that it could go. But God knows what is best for his children and he will lead us toward that, that fulfillment in him and that unspeakable unmatched joy that we can only find in the person of Jesus when we seek him and follow him every day. That is what is best. But the secondary, what is less than the best, will distract us from the primary. You understand the difference there?

[14 : 12] So in the life of our church, when we're interacting with each other, when we're serving together, how many of you guys watch football? We're in Texas. Come on. I've seen people that aren't raising their hands at football games. Okay, come on now, y'all. Yeah. So y'all understand what it means to be drawn off sides. Had a football game? We're getting a little down under the surface here. All right, now we know who's really a football player. It's not. That's all right. When you're drawn off sides, right, before they blow the whistle, you got to stay on your side of the line. You see them lined up, the offense here, the defense here. You see the big old boys on the line lined up across from each other and they're getting ready to just, you know, slam into each other. And until, until they snap the ball and the play starts, they got to stay on their sides of the line.

Well, sometimes that quarterback will say things that make the defense think the play is starting and they'll jump off sides. They'll jump to the other side and then the referee blows his whistle, throws the flag and they get a penalty. They get to move the ball up, right?

It's so easy to let that kind of thing happen in our day-to-day lives. I used to have a boss that told me regularly, don't get drawn off sides. Don't let this little matter draw you off sides because guess what folks? People will continually try to draw you off sides. They will. Coworkers will draw you off sides. They're skilled at it. Children will draw you off sides. Children and parents will draw you off sides. Your brothers and sisters will draw you off sides. The devil will use whatever he can to get to you, to get under your skin, to draw you off sides. Those things are secondary. Don't let what is secondary become primary. Remember in those moments, now look, this is easier said than done, right? But that's why we need the power of the Holy Spirit to help us overcome our own fleshly tendencies. So don't let what is secondary become primary by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's look at this. Number one, we see in this passage in Luke chapter 10, the wrong complaint. The wrong complaint.

Martha had the wrong complaint. She got drawn off sides. She got drawn off sides by Mary listening to Jesus teaching. Now, if that can draw somebody off sides, anything can draw us off sides, right?

We sit here in our seat of judgment thinking, Martha, what were you thinking? This is Jesus. I mean, let your sister listen to the master, right? What were you thinking? And yet we do a similar kind of thing with regularity. You and I get upset at people for the most meaningless of things.

[17 : 21] Sometimes it happens. And we come up with the wrong complaint, just like Martha did. Look back at Luke chapter 10. Martha was distracted by her many tasks. These are some of the things that will help draw you off sides. It is when you become distracted by your many tasks. There are many things going on in your life. There have to be. Somebody's got to cook the food, right? Somebody's got to pay the bills. Somebody's got to go to work. Somebody's got to keep up with the yard. Somebody's got to make sure the dog has food. Somebody's got to make sure the things get done that need to get done. Somebody's got to serve on the committee. Somebody's got to teach the classes. Somebody's got to do all the things or else nothing gets done, right? So those are the things often that distract us.

Is it wrong to do acts of service for God? Of course not. No. But is it wrong to let those acts of service distract us from the very God we're serving? Yes. And that's easy to do. It's very easy to do.

I've been around church ministry since I was born. My dad was a pastor. My older brother has been a pastor. Now I'm a pastor. We're a family of pastors and I've worked plenty of other jobs along the way.

This is actually the first time that I've been a, what you'd call lead, lead pastor or senior pastor. So I've worked all kinds of other jobs along the way, but I've always stayed very close and sometimes worked for church churches. Um, and it's so easy with all that you're involved in doing for God to let those things distract you from God himself.

Martha had Jesus Christ in her house and she was worried about what kind of dishes they were serving. She was worried about, you know, the cracker arrangement and et cetera, so to speak.

[19 : 34] It's like, Martha, worry about that stuff the next time you have guests over, but you got Jesus here right now. Just go sit and listen to him. Right. And that's what Jesus was trying to explain to her.

So she had the wrong complaint. Now, sometimes there's the right complaint. Sometimes when things that are happening around us are actually preventing the gospel from getting out or actually keeping people from Jesus, yeah, then we need to make a complaint. But unless that's happening, y'all 99 times out of a hundred, the complaints that seems so important in our mind in those moments, they probably don't even need to be voiced. We probably need to look at within our heart and say, is this a God thing? Is this a gospel issue? Is this something that is preventing people from hearing the gospel of Jesus? Or is this something that has just become big in my mind and I need to hand it over to God and refocus my attention on him? So that's the wrong complaint. But then secondly, we have the right choice. We have the right choice. Thankfully, in verse 39, the sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to what he said, Jesus said, that is the one thing that is necessary. That's the one thing. Mary has made the right choice and it will not be taken away from her. I encourage you folks. I encourage you. Now, when we get a group of people together this side, this size, and I know we got some people out because Pioneer Union and all that, but so often every seat just about in this room is filled and you get a group of people together this size, you're going to have some complaints come up, right? It's natural. It's going to happen. But I pray that God leads us as a body of believers to get to the place where we're making more right choices than wrong complaints.

Is that fair? We need to get to the place where we are making more right choices than wrong complaints. As I said before, there will come a time for right complaints, but those are few and far between.

Mostly, it's our flesh that gets in the way. And what seems like the most important thing in our world is really distracting us from making the right choice, which is sitting at Jesus' feet.

How much time do we spend on a day-to-day basis? And I'm preaching to myself as much as I'm preaching to you. How much time do we spend on a daily basis sitting at Jesus' feet? Jesus doesn't have to come visit our house. The Holy Spirit of God walks with us everywhere we go. God himself is present with us when we go to bed, when we wake and start our day, when we eat, when we fellowship, when we argue, when we strive with one another. But God is present with us every moment of every day. He's there. Why don't we carve out time to sit and listen to him, to dive into his book, read his instruction manual for our life?

[22 : 47] One thing is necessary. Mary made the right choice. May God help us to make the right choice. Now, the flip side of our takeaway. Don't let what is secondary become primary. The flip side here is don't let what is primary become secondary. You realize when we let what is secondary, secondary, when we let the least important things or the less important things become the most important, then guess what? It seems obvious, but we may not always see it this way. The most important things become less important. And that is equally wrong, possibly even more wrong. We're minimizing the gospel of Jesus. We're minimizing the person of Jesus. When we let what is less than the best become the most important thing in our world in that moment, then we have minimized God himself and the work that he called us to do, the message that he gave us to spread. Don't let what is primary become secondary. I told you we were going to go to Revelation, so let's do that now.

Revelation chapter 2. You can keep a thumb in Luke 10 if you'd like to, but Revelation chapter 2. We'll read a few verses here, beginning in verse 1. The apostle John was writing by inspiration of God, as we talked about with the kids up here just a minute ago. He's writing by inspiration of God the letters to the seven churches.

These were typified by seven lampstands, seven golden lampstands. It's kind of an analogy that God is using here in these letters to these churches of that day. So we can kind of stick ourselves in there as a church that God has allowed to organize on this earth to worship him and to carry out his mission.

So in verse 1, write to the angel of the church in Ephesus. Thus says the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven golden lampstands. Remember that God is walking among our church. It's not just us apart from God trying to serve him. He's present here with us. Verse 2, I know your works, your labor, and your endurance.

Let's personalize this, okay? God is telling us we can jump in with this church in Ephesus that was trying to serve God and do the best they could for him, and he's writing these encouraging words to them. So let's make this personal for us. I know your works, your labor, your endurance.

[25 : 27] Yes, this church has been around 140 something years. We've got some endurance here, okay? If you wanted to see our church laboring, do we labor as a church? You should have been out here with us yesterday handing out water bottles to the Pioneer Union crowd. That was so much fun.

We got some pictures we're going to throw up on Facebook. I think Linda already has some. So he says, I know all this and that you cannot tolerate evil people. Can we tolerate evil people? Not so much, huh? It's hard. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not. That's good. False teachers should not be present in the church of Jesus Christ.

And you have found them to be liars. These are all compliments from the Lord. I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of my name and have not grown weary. But wait a minute.

I have this against you. You have abandoned the love you had at first. Look right there at the bottom of the screen. It should be in your Bible as well. You have abandoned the love you had at first.

It might say, hey, you have left your first love. I'm going to interpret it this way. One thing was necessary.

[26 : 50] You've let what is secondary become primary. You've let what is less important become most important. You have abandoned the love you had at first. So pick it up in verse five. Remember then.

Remember then how far you have fallen. You see that y'all? I didn't write that. God put that in the Bible. Remember how far you have fallen. This is a big deal to God because he knows how important it is. He knows how distracting it can be for a church that strives against each other because they left their first love, because they forgot the one thing that was necessary, because they let what is less important become most important. He said, you have fallen far.

You've fallen far. So repent. Don't minimize it in your own mind. Oh, this isn't such a big deal. This is just who I am. Okay. You just need to understand that these things are important to me. Okay.

That's great. But what's important to God? What's important to God? I'm glad you've got your hobby horse. I'm glad you've got the things that are most important to you. You can certainly pursue those things in your own life. But when it comes to the life of our church, keep your poison to yourself.

Keep your poison to yourself because if it's not pursuing the person of Jesus Christ, it is poison. It will infect across the body of our believers and it will get us off course. And how many churches across our country have gotten off course and they've left their first love and they're no longer accomplishing the mission that God gave them to accomplish? Then shut the doors.

[28 : 38] Shut the doors and let somebody else come in and have your building who's going to keep it on track. Now, God help us not to let that happen to first Baptist Henrietta. We're going to stay on track, y'all. We're going to keep Jesus Christ as the focus.

Repent and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, you think I'm being too harsh? Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. He will shut us down.

God is in charge of this church. This church is not about us. You see how all these statements that we're trying to adopt work together and build on each other? The church is not about us. It's about God and God can come and shut us down whenever he wants to. He's in control of this thing. So let's remember how far we've fallen. Let's repent and go back and do the works we did at first. Go back to that love that we left so God does not remove our lampstand. Now, there we go. Oswald Chambers wrote one of the books that has been one of the most widely read and loved among Christian literature. It's called my utmost for his highest. And he said in there, the good is always the enemy of the best. I think that's directly applicable to our lesson today from Luke chapter 10. The good is always the enemy of the best. What Martha was doing was good, but it wasn't the best. Y'all, I want us to put our church under the magnifying glass. Put our personal roles in this church under the magnifying glass.

Put how you are spending your personal time at home, how you are spending your family time. Put it under the magnifying glass and say, is it good or is it best? We only have so much energy. We only have so much time. Let's not waste it on what is good. Let's directly apply it to what is best. It's not complicated, but it is hard. It's pursuing Jesus. It's sitting at his feet. All right. One thing is necessary. Philippians chapter three. Paul kind of echoed this. You wondered if Paul might get in on this, this teaching in scripture. Uh, and he, in his letter to the church of Philippi, he says, I am single minded for getting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead. Uh, with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul couldn't be distracted by what was less than the best. And all kinds of people tried to in that early church. You think they were without strife and contention? No, we read it in the letters all throughout the new Testament. They were constantly going back and forth at each other.

[31 : 43] And Paul was having to go back and say, y'all join me, be single minded. Follow me as I follow Jesus. Don't let all this stuff sidetrack you because the devil is trying to use it. He's trying to use sometimes what is good to distract you from what is best. Do I find myself complaining about others or concentrating on Christ? Can we ask ourselves that question? Do I find myself complaining about others more than I'm concentrating on Christ? Let's get back to our takeaway. Don't let what is secondary become primary. You're going to hear me say that from time to time. Don't take it personally.

I got to remind myself of that continually throughout each week and each month throughout the year in this moment with this issue that seems so important in our minds. Are we letting what is secondary become primary? So how do we apply this? I don't know exactly what's happening in your life.

I don't know everything that is a big deal in your mind. Sometimes people come to me with concerns and I'm not saying that just because you've come to me with something means that you're in the wrong.

That's not at all what I'm saying. But I'm saying we each need to put ourselves under the magnifying glass and say, God, is this about you or is this about me? Am I being Martha or am I being Mary?

Am I complaining about somebody or am I concentrating on Jesus? Let's pray together. Lord, I ask that you would move in our hearts that every single person in here would let the Holy Spirit speak to them right now.

[33 : 31] If first you need to awaken them to their need for you as a Savior to repent of their sins and put their faith in Jesus to cleanse them from their sins, secure their home, eternal destiny in heaven and make you their child, then I pray that they would respond to the Holy Spirit with the answer of yes. And God, for those of us who have already done that, we know without a doubt that we stand before you as born again, children of God, redeemed by the blood of your Son.