

Order of Worship for July 17, 2022

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Opening Hymn: “Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty” – Hymn #901

Confession and Forgiveness p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm

P: Your word is a lamp to my feet

C: and a light to my path.

P: The LORD is my portion;

C: I promise to keep Your words.

P: I entreat Your favor with all my heart;

C: be gracious to me according to Your promise.

P: When I think on my ways,

C: I turn my feet to Your testimonies;

P: I hasten and do not delay

C: to keep Your commandments.

P: The earth, O LORD, is full of Your steadfast love;

C: teach me Your statutes!

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Your word is a lamp to my feet

C: and a light to my path.

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 204

Hymn of Praise (Glory to God in the Highest) p. 204

Salutation

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray: O Lord, grant us the Spirit to hear Your Word and know the one thing needful that by Your Word and Spirit we may live according to Your will; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 18:1–10a

R: The LORD appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” The LORD said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Colossians 1:21-29

R: And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, Christ has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia p. 205

Holy Gospel: Luke 10:38-42

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 10th chapter.

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to Him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many

things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ

Nicene Creed:

Sermon Hymn: *“One Thing’s Needful”* – **Hymn # 536**

Sermon: *“One Thing Is Needful”*– **Luke 10:38-42**

I grew up in the era that said that the harder you worked, the better you would do. In sports we were taught that the key to success was to hustle; not in the sense of cheating, but give it your maximum. That may seem to still be the case among athletes, but we are told other things about work.

The Covid epidemic forced people to slow down and reevaluate their work. Many decided to quit and take other jobs. Many have settled for early retirement. Others have stayed at their jobs, but have insisted that they could work fewer hours and do more work at home as they did when everything seemed to be done by Zoom. Companies are experimenting with 4 day work weeks. In places like Europe vacation times can be double what we have here.

What makes that hard for me with my background is that it can seem that people don’t want to do hard work. It used to be a popular job to spend the summer being a swimming pool lifeguard. You could get a great tan and get paid for it. Now they can’t find enough people to do that. Working construction or detasseling corn was hard work, but popular because you made good money. The money for that is still good, but who wants to work in the heat and humidity of summer when you can do something on a computer with AC? People complain about illegal immigrants in this country. But without them, who would roof our roofs, pick our produce, or do the work we don’t want to do? People who were plumbers or electricians or HVAC technicians were skilled people who provided well for their families. But who wants to do that work today?

So I find myself sympathizing with Martha in the story. Here she is working her tail off to make a great meal for Jesus and her sister just sits around listening to Jesus. It fills me with thoughts of people who seem to not work because the government will bail them out, young people who think they are entitled to a free college education, and the expectation in our culture that AC, a screen for every member of the family, and using morning showers as saunas is our right.

But what lies behind that? Am I really trying to work hard to serve God, or is it something else? I learned a long time ago that if you at least appear to be busy, then you won’t get caught doing nothing. If Mary had been washing Jesus’ feet or something like that, Martha wouldn’t have complained. And if I am busy doing something, then I think I am on God’s side.

My hard work earns me brownie points with God. The busier I am, the more important I am, the better I am.

In Jesus' time those who felt they were closest to God were people like the Pharisees who made sure to follow all the exterior rules of their faith. They followed the proper procedures for diet, washing before meals, giving alms, and praying in public. It wasn't that they worked harder than others (in fact they had the poor do all the dirty, hard jobs for them). But they could think of themselves as better than others.

The Roman Catholic Church 500 years ago saw that in terms, not of the Jewish laws, but what was commended by church tradition. The more works you did for the church, the better you were. Those works originally were genuine charities, but it became more things like paying for masses, praying a lot of "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys", and buying indulgences to finance cathedrals. Again, it was a matter of working to gain God's favor.

The Reformation created the Protestant churches who stated that those catholic good works don't save us. But even though salvation by grace through faith was preached, there developed among Protestants—many of our ancestors in north Europe—that hard work makes us better than others—the so-called "Protestant Ethic" and the idea that "idleness is the workshop of the devil." That is my heritage. That is why it is so easy for me to be like Martha.

So is work evil? Is the solution for us to be lazy? If we feel that Mary was that, as Martha did, then we are dead wrong. The problem is not working too hard or not enough, but what lies behind it. Jesus refers to this as "the one thing needful."

Experts tell us how important it is to not only work hard, but to work smart. If I work hard building a structure on a poor foundation, I am wasting my time. It is not only important for athletes to work hard, but to work out the right way. That's why athletic teams have professional trainers who make sure the athletes train in ways that build up their strength, skills, and endurance, rather than injure themselves. One football player made a spectacular run after a fumble to score a touchdown. But he ran the wrong way. One commentator said about it, "At least he gave it 100%," but what good was that when he scored for the other team?

Jesus offers us the only things that really will last—a life with Him. Anything we have or gain in this life is gone when we die. But what Jesus offers lasts forever. The smart thing is to do as Mary did—to give time first to God.

So do I go out and spend an hour each day in prayer and Bible study? Perhaps, but that can be a daunting task for us. How about trying this? Get up in the morning and first thing, make the sign of the cross as was done over us in baptism and say, "I have been baptized into Christ Jesus." That's simple, but it can set the tone for our whole day. When you have to wait, say for a doctor, spend time with God. If you have a cell phone with internet, it is as simple as googling the Bible or a devotion. Think about the people in your life, and just think a thought about how God can help them. Instead of just having a meal prayer, ask family members to share a blessing God gave them that day.

In our women's Bible study during the week we were looking at women in the Bible. One woman was Tabitha (she was also known by her Greek name, Dorcas). She was an early Christian who used her talents as a seamstress to provide for the poor. She died, but Peter was sent to the town of Joppa where she lived. When he got to her home he saw all the people mourning her death. He was given the power by the Holy Spirit to bring her back to life. Tabitha was a woman who kept quite busy, but not to impress anyone, to succeed, or to cover up weaknesses. She did it because of the "one thing needful," her love for her Lord Jesus Christ.

Before an athlete works out, he or she stretches out. Before a busy day of work, we should eat a healthy breakfast. Before assembling something, (unless you are a man) you should read the directions. Likewise, when we give a little time first for God, then He can shape our whole day. We see that the jerk who cut us off in traffic is also someone who Jesus died for on the cross. We see that our children need more for us to give them time each day than material blessings. We are more willing to forgive than gloat over someone else's mistakes. We become more and more a part of what can never be taken from us. And at work or play, busy or at rest, we do the one needful thing—Christ Jesus.

Prayers of the Church

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering/Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

Preface p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all time and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father, for You have given us the one thing needful in Your Son Christ Jesus who has restored us to You so that our lives can focus on You and how You direct us to love You by loving others. Therefore, with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name, evermore praising You and singing. . .

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P: Blessed are You, O God, Creator of heaven and earth, for You have made us to live in a loving relationship with You. In Your Son Christ Jesus You have redeemed us from the powers of darkness so we can live in the one needful relationship with You and the people You put in our lives. Send Your Holy Spirit to that we come to Jesus' supper in true faith trusting that we receive His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Hear us we pray in His name and as He taught us . . .

Lord's Prayer, Words of our Lord, and Peace of the Lord p. 209

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

Distribution Hymns:

“Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing” - **Hymn # 584**

“Jesus Comes Today with Healing” - **Hymn #620**

Song after Communion: (*Nunc Dimittis*) p. 211

Prayer after Communion:

P: O God, You see how busy we are with many things. Turn us to listen to Your teachings and lead us to choose the one thing needful which will not be taken away from us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Benedicamus and Blessing: p.212

Closing Hymn: *“For All the Faithful Women”* – **Hymn #855**, vs. 1, 9, 3, 4

Postlude