



**MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**AND**  
**IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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July 20, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Genesis 18:1-14](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 119b CW<sup>93</sup>

Second Lesson: [Colossians 1:1-14](#)

Gospel Lesson/ Sermon Text: [Luke 10:38-42](#)

**UNDIVIDED ATTENTION**  
**On the One Thing Needful**  
**REST IN THE ONE THING NEEDFUL**

1. There are many \_\_\_\_\_ things in life.
2. There is only one \_\_\_\_\_ thing that lasts.
3. We seek \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jesus invites us to \_\_\_\_\_ in His \_\_\_\_\_.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

**CHILDREN'S DEVOTION**

I have a few things here, some cleaner, a rag, and a little vacuum. When you have a party or when friends or relatives come over, you sometimes have to clean the house. Does everyone at your house always clean in the same way? Sometimes do more people help than other people? How do you feel when maybe you are the only one cleaning and someone else is sitting there playing, watching TV, and not helping? Does that make you happy? Or are you saying, "Why do I have to clean everything? Why don't they help?" Do you ever feel that way? Is that fair? Do you go, "I have to do it all!" Maybe you adults feel that sometimes, too, because no one else is helping and you feel like you're the only one doing anything.

In our Sermon we're going to hear about Mary and Martha, who had Jesus come to their house. Martha is preparing everything, which is a good thing because Jesus is there. She is getting everything ready, the food and cleaning up, but Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus. And Martha is upset and says, "Jesus, don't you care that I'm doing all this stuff and Mary is just sitting there doing nothing?" Do you know what Jesus says? He says, "Mary has chosen what is better."

There are a lot of good things for us to do. We should help mommy and daddy. We should clean up. But also, do you know what the most important thing for us to learn and to know about is? It's Jesus. So, even though there are lots and lots of things to do, we always want to make time for Jesus, like coming to church (like you guys are), like praying and having devotions at home, maybe singing hymns, doing all sorts of things that spends time in God's Word.

Now, what I don't want you to take home and say is "Oh, Pastor said I don't have to clean. He said I can listen to God's Word." You guys know better. But we have to say God's Word is important because it gives us faith and hope and forgiveness because we learn about Jesus. So let's always put Jesus first and then we can also help to serve God in other ways, too.

Let's say a prayer. *Heavenly Father, you give us many things to do and to serve one another, but most of all, we thank you for the Word of God that you give us. Thank you that through the Word of God, we learn about Jesus and the forgiveness of sins and that means that we have heaven and it can never be taken away. We thank you for this and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **SERMON**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Maybe you've had this feeling before where you are on the road and you go "Oh no! Let's turn around!" This is in the summer packing season, as people are going camping or flying, going on vacations and the weeks and the days leading up to it you are packing and thinking about what you need. Some of the things aren't so important. You pack so many shoes and all these different things. But there are some things that if you forget, it's a big deal. That one thing that "If I forgot that, that would be a huge deal."

My wife and I just went to Arizona for a wedding and we were flying and because you need those new IDs, my wife needed to bring her passport because she doesn't have the new one yet. The one thing we really needed to bring was a passport, so we made sure to have that. We were driving down the street about 5-10 minutes and something in my mind went "Oh, I forgot this!" But it wasn't that one thing needed. It wasn't the thing that "If I don't have this, then things aren't going to work out."

There are lots of things that we pack. There are lots of things that we need. But there is often one thing that is a more important thing than all the other things. This is how it is with life. We can worry and we can stress about so many things, but if you don't have that one thing, you can really stress. It might make you a little more anxious. But having that one thing needful really gives us true rest.

Then what Jesus talks about, not just talking about a physical thing, here we are going to talk about the spiritual thing, that thing that we really need, and this is what Jesus tells Martha—that we need that one thing.

We probably know this story fairly well. It's a short section. There are so many important things that are discussed here as Jesus enters into the house of Mary and Martha and you've maybe heard many times, there are even books—be a Mary in a world of Marthas. We can often pit the two against each other. As we look at this, though, we want to look and see that Martha was doing good things. Imagine that there is the Messiah, the One promised, and He probably had His disciples with Him. Is she just serving Jesus and a few people? There are probably other people that are there and there was a lot to do. The Messiah, this guy who has been teaching and preaching, is in their house! We want to clean. We want to serve. They might be hungry since they walked around and don't really have a home. So is Martha doing good things? Yes, the fact that Jesus came into her house, this is a great thing. This is a blessing.

I think the first thing we want to think about when we think about this lesson is that **there are many good things in life**. We don't want to say what Martha was doing was bad, like "How foolish she was to be serving food and to be making things comfortable as Jesus was teaching." That was good. It's probably something she loved to do and was privileged to do it. Also think about all the good things you have in life. Sometimes when we talk about the one thing needful or this story, it's like "All these other things are bad. How dare you do this?" It's not true. God has given you so many blessings. Maybe one of the helpful things is to think about all those things. In the Sermon notes it says to even list all those things. List the blessings you have. Maybe it's your family and friends, work, some possessions, the talents that God gives you. These are blessings as well. God has blessed you with these and they are all good things. So if God has given you talents to serve in certain ways, is that a bad thing for you to be using them? It's not. It's a good thing. It's a good thing to serve God and serve others. But what we always have to think about is that there are many good things and there are many things to love in this world. It's not a matter of what is good and bad, because notice when Jesus talks to Martha, we see that He says **"...you are worried and upset about many things..."** and earlier, ***But Martha was distracted with all her serving.*** So when Jesus says, ***"Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but one thing is needed. In fact, Mary has chosen that better part, which will not be taken away from her."*** It's not that these things are bad and this one is good, but when I LOVE things in a disordered way, that's the problem. When I take good things and make them God things, that causes so many problems. So while there are many good things in life, **there is only one God thing that lasts**.

What do we mean by that? It's that God's Word trumps everything. God's Word and the faith that is worked through the Gospel means everything. The problem is that there are all these good things. We can get so distracted. It says she was upset and worried about many things. We have many good things, but do those good things get

in the way of the God thing. It's kind of like when you talk about someone who is wealthy, or the more things that you get, the more worries you have. If you have the boat and this, now you have maintenance on all these different things, so yes, we have good things, but are we so worried and stressed about those things that in the end are temporary? All those good things, they won't last. They are still a blessing but what does last is God's Word. It lasts into eternity. And that faith in Jesus, He works through it, and it means forgiveness and peace. It's a peace that surpasses my understanding. Even in the most difficult of times and the greatest hardship that comes, the greatest sadness, I can still have peace. When all things are taken away, when nothing is left, and when this life ends, I still have Jesus because I have eternity, because Jesus has paid for my sins and He welcomes me into heaven, to be in the presence of God and Jesus forever. How great this is! How much better this is than all of those good things. You can put ALL the good things together and they don't even compare to one day in God's presence.

We need to be reminded that yes, God has given us so many blessings, but there is the one God thing. The Word of God that works faith in our hearts, faith in Jesus; that gives us eternal life and peace and forgiveness forever. That one thing is so special.

But then why do we do the things that we do? Why was Martha working? If we know that faith is so important, why are we so stressed? Why are we doing all the other things? Is it because it's so hard for us to sit and to not do? We talked about Abraham and Sarah, who God had talked to and told them, "I'm going to give you a child," but that took years and years and years. So what did they do? They took things into their own hands.

Do you like to listen or do you like to do? Maybe this is a personal thing for different people and different personalities, but we always think about husband and wife. Husband and wife are sitting there and the wife is sharing with the husband all the things that are going on. And what is the husband thinking? "How can I fix it?" This is what we should do. What does the wife want the husband to do? She just wants him to listen. "I just want to tell you what is going on. I don't want you to fix it. I just want you to listen." But usually guys, that's not how we function. So I think guys, we can understand this, but I think it's true for all of us when it comes to God's Word. **We seek work and control.** We like to be the busy Marthas instead of sitting at the feet of Jesus because sitting means "I'm not doing anything. I'm not in control. I'm not fixing the problem. I have to just sit and listen? But then I'm not doing." That's being passive. We like to be active. We like to fix it and to just sit and listen to God's Word? That says "I'm not in control. God is. I have to trust Him to get it done and I can't fix it all." That's hard. But it is so important that we hear God's Word and God's love because of all the things that we face. We can't do it on our own.

A great question is, are the words to Martha in this section Law or Gospel? When you think about Jesus speaking to Martha, "You're worried and distracted. Mary has chosen

the better thing and it will not be taken away.” There is one thing needful. Is that Law or Gospel?

Yes, we know in Scripture that Law and Gospel are contained in this section. Both are there, but which one do you hear and which do you need to hear at this time is also a good question. Are you busy? Is this Law? Do you understand “I have to sit there at Jesus’ feet”? But I think what I want you to know is that this is a huge invitation. Yes, Jesus has come to Mary and Martha and Jesus is giving this Gospel message to Martha and saying, “Come and sit and hear and rest and be filled with the Word of God.” I think more than Law is this Gospel invitation for Martha to sit and rest in the Word of God.

**Jesus invites us to rest in His Word.**

Why is it so important to sit and rest in God’s Word? When we are working, we might think “I can do it,” but we just can’t because there are things that come that we can’t control and we’re going to have to be filled with Jesus’ Word and His Gospel and His forgiveness and His peace. How do Mary and Martha experience this? Not much later, but what happens is their brother, Lazarus, dies. What do we see from Martha? Martha gives this great confession. Now, instead of being busy, she has actually been sitting because she knows what Jesus had been preaching. She gives a confession that she believes in the resurrection of the dead and Jesus says, “I am the resurrection of life. Anyone who believes in me will rise again.” Martha says, “I believe that’s true, that you are the Messiah.” She gives an amazing confession about who Jesus is, because she has been listening. ([See John 11:1-44.](#))

And Mary, too, is the one who anoints the feet of Jesus, for burial. The disciples, you know what they were always thinking about, the kingdom of God. “How can we have power? How can we have authority?” And Mary has been sitting there and listening and says, “Jesus, I know you’re going to die.” These two women sit at the feet of Jesus and they are listening and understanding the Gospel message—that He is going to die and rise again and that He is the Messiah.

So sometimes we need to be reminded. Sometimes we need that Law to hit us and to wake us up. But most of all, we need that Gospel message that says “Sit and listen and be filled so that you have faith in the most difficult times and you can trust in Jesus and know that He is enough.” We can rest and we don’t have to do everything.

I saw this picture online this week from another Christian of another faith, and it had two roads. It had one believing in Jesus and then a small path of obedience to Jesus. The point of that (and this is another denomination, so it’s their point) is that many people believe in Jesus, but only few people are really serving Jesus.

What does Jesus want? Where does service and obedience flow from? It flows from belief and faith. So does Jesus want your service? Yes, but more than that is He wants your heart. He wants your faith and belief and from that, the fruits of faith follow.

I heard this as I was preparing for this sermon. So often we talked about when something happens. Maybe it's a spill or something or an emergency and someone says "Don't just sit there! Do something!" I'm sure you've said that or heard that at times before. What is Jesus telling us today? He's kind of flipping it around. "Don't just do something, sit there. Sit there and rest in the Word of God that restores your soul, gives you peace and forgiveness and that enables you go out there and serve one another."

So as we go out, here's a huge reminder—it's not that Martha was wrong and was doing so many bad things, but Mary had chosen the most important thing, the thing that lasts into eternity. I think it's true for you and me that sometimes we need the Gospel reminder—don't just do. Don't just try to do it all on your own, but sit there and soak in that Gospel peace, the Gospel truth about Jesus that He has died and forgiven you for the times that we're so busy and so stressed. We're not going to stop being busy. But we can have our hope and peace in Christ when we prioritize that and not find being in God's Word or going to church or doing devotions as a burden but a joy. "I get to do this!"

When is the last time that you came to church, read a devotion, or went to a Bible study and you said "Oh, that was a waste of time! I didn't find any rest or peace or hope in that." I think it's true, for me and for you, that every time we're in God's Word it fills our hearts with a peace and a hope and a forgiveness that nothing else can give. And it especially gives us that peace and hope into eternity, knowing we have heaven and sins forgiven until life everlasting. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.***