

# (Worship) Session 2: One Thing Needful

by Joseph Carroll

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*The one thing needful in the Christian life is to cultivate a deep love and intimacy with God through worship and aloneness.*

**Duration:** 56:11

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:1-5, Matthew 6:6, Luke 10:38-42, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 10:19

**Topics:** "Worship", "Intimacy With God"

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## Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the necessity of worship in the life of a believer, drawing from Psalm 27 to illustrate that the one thing needful is to dwell in the presence of the Lord. He highlights the lives of Hudson Taylor and A.W. Tozer, both of whom prioritized worship and intimate fellowship with God above all else. Carroll contrasts the attitudes of Martha and Mary, showing that true worship requires a conscious choice to prioritize Christ over the distractions of life. He asserts that this choice leads to a deeper understanding of God's heart and a more effective Christian life. Ultimately, the sermon calls believers to cultivate a passionate and consistent worship life as the foundation for all other spiritual endeavors.

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## Transcript

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for Thy presence with us by Thy Spirit, and we are trusting Thee to glorify Thy Son as we wait before Thee and lead us into the truth that we might know it and be set free, set free to worship Thee and love Thee and serve Thee and in the name of Thy Son serve others for His sake. And this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

I'm reading in the Word of God from the 27th Psalm. Psalm 27, verse 1 to verse 5. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life.

Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies in my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

One thing have I desired of the Lord. That will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty or the loveliness of the Lord and to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion.

In the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me. He shall set me upon a rock. In the evangelical missionary world there is no name more revered than that of Hudson Taylor.

Hudson Taylor was the father of modern faith missions, a remarkable man. The two volumes of his life by his daughter-in-law are possibly the two greatest works on missionary activity ever written. The growth of a soul and the growth of a work of God.

Hudson Taylor, what was it that made him the man he became and was right to the end? His daughter-in-law and his son who traveled consistently with him in his later years testified that very often they would be traveling over a hard cobblestone road for many hours in a springless cart and they would come to a Chinese inn late at night and endeavor to find in the inn just a little corner in a room for Hudson Taylor. Usually in those inns there was just one large room and everybody slept in the room but they tried they tried to get a little space for him in a corner. He was now an aged man but without fail every morning just before dawn there would be the scratching of the match and the lighting of the candle and Hudson Taylor would worship God.

This is the key to his life. It was said the sun never rose on China but Hudson Taylor was worshiping God. And what did this great man write concerning missions? This man who understood indigenous principles.

Did he give us a great volume on the how of missions on the how of planting churches? No. Did he write at length on indigenous principles? No. What did he do? He gave us a very small book a commentary on the song of Solomon.

How very interesting and how very revealing. What was the key to Hudson Taylor's life? He loved his Lord and he cultivated that love. After all it is the first commandment.

He loved his Lord and he cultivated that love. And love is cultivated in aloneness with the one you love. And this Hudson Taylor guarded right to the end.

I've had the privilege of listening to most of the men who would be considered the great preachers in the world today. And one who is now with the Lord was Dr. Tozer. Tozer was different.

He spoke with a freshness and a penetration that was most rare. He labored in the city of Chicago for many years. And an acquaintance of mine was called to minister in Chicago.

And when he arrived in the city Tozer called him and he said this city is a devil's den. It's a very difficult place to minister the word of God. And you will come up against much opposition from the enemy.

But if you ever want to pray with me I am at the lakeside every morning at 5 30. Just make your way down and we can pray together. My acquaintance did not go to the lakeside.

He didn't want to bother the great man as he was seeking the Lord. But one day he was troubled and he made his way very early to the lakeside about six o'clock. And he found Tozer on his face on the sand worshipping God.

Needless to say he did not disturb him. But went back to his own office and sought the Lord on his own. Tozer worshipped God.

Tozer one of the few men who preached consistently on the need to be a worshiper of God. And who told the church in no uncertain manner that it was now the missing jewel in the crown of the church. I came

across the necessity to worship as a man in the world would say quite by accident.

But it was not by accident. It was by God's appointment. In the early days of my ministry in Australia it was my habit when in the city of Sydney to meet with a number of brothers in Christ to pray for day of prayer.

We would begin about eight o'clock in the evening. And in the afternoon it was usually a time of tiredness. But we would pray round in our circle each in his turn.

And it came my turn one afternoon and I was very tired. And I began to quote a few verses from a psalm. The heavens declare thy glory.

The firmament show thy handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech. Night unto night showeth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. And suddenly I was quickened. I was quickened by the Spirit of God and I began to pour out my heart in prayer.

I hadn't prayed like that all day. The usual prayers. But this was different.

So when I finished and the others were praying I was doing a lot of thinking and waiting upon the Lord. Now what had I done? Well I had begun with these verses from the psalm of worshiping God. That's what I had done.

So next time round I did the same thing again. And the same thing happened. I was quickened by the Spirit of God.

And there was that outpouring in intercession and in petition. I was borne along by the Spirit of God. Now the best time of course to worship is in the morning.

Is in the morning. It is in that time which we call a quiet time. But what is a quiet time to you? For me as a young Christian in the early years it was anything but a relaxed time.

A meditative time. In fact it was a time when I had to get through a certain study of the Word of God and get through certain prayers that I had to pray for my prayer list. This was my quiet time.

It was not really a quiet time. It was a study time. It was a time for intercession.

And it was a time for petition. And then I came to a very intensive study of the teaching of our Lord on prayer. And I found as I studied that if you collate all that our Lord ever taught on prayer, you will find he teaches ten lessons.

And at the Institute where we teach our course on prayer these are the foundation of all else. Our Lord's ten lessons on prayer. The first lesson is in Matthew 6, verse 6. And you will also discover that you cannot advance from one lesson to the other unless you have mastered the one first.

In other words, you cannot go to lesson two unless you've mastered lesson one. You cannot go to lesson three unless you master lesson two. Matthew 6, verse 6. Now I want you to notice how very personal this first lesson is.

But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Our Lord's first lesson in prayer. What is it? He's saying the first thing you must do is get somewhere alone with me.

A closet is a closed place. A room can become a closet. It means aloneness.

A forest can become a closet. The important thing is aloneness is secrecy. Being alone with your father.

And when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy father which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Now what would this mean to those to whom the Lord uttered these words? What would it mean to them? Well, to the Jew, the enclosed place which was more enclosed than any other place and which would immediately come to them as that which our Lord was referring to was the holiest of all. That innermost court of the tabernacle and temple where the high priest met with God once every year alone.

It had no door, it had no skylight, it had no window, it was completely enclosed. And the high priest went into that closet and he stood before God and it's neither intimated or suggested that he ever uttered a word. We are so valuable today, aren't we? Prayer is a thing of the heart.

You express your prayer before you utter it. It comes from your heart. God looks on the heart.

But we're so valuable. We like to talk. Amy Carmichael said is it so important to be a mouth? It's much more important to have a heart.

The high priest went out and he stood. He stood in the presence of God not without blood and he communed with God on the basis of a mercy seat, blood-sprinkled mercy seat. And he brought back from that communion with God a message for the people.

This is the first lesson to learn. What is it? Aloneness, secrecy, communing with God on the basis of a blood-sprinkled mercy seat. Now if we turn to Hebrews chapter 10 verse 19 having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

How do we enter into the holiest? By the blood of Jesus. How do we come into the presence of God? By the blood of Jesus. How do we commune with God? We commune with God on the basis of a mercy seat.

Jesus Christ is our mercy seat, the Lamb of God. Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way or freshly slaughtered way which he has consecrated for us through the veil that is to say his flesh by a new and living freshly slaughtered. It was Martin Luther who said it seems but yesterday that Jesus died.

This great giant of a man, this dynamic man what made him the man that he was he was very conscious that he walked and he lived in the presence of a Christ who had been slain for him. It seems but yesterday that Jesus died. He knew what it was to come in to the presence of God by the blood of Jesus and to meditate upon the Lamb of God and that sacrifice of Christ is just as real to the father at this moment as that moment when he hung upon that cross.

So what is the writer to the Hebrews saying to us? We enter into the holiest into the very presence of God by the blood of Jesus to commune with him on the basis of a blood-sprinkled mercy seat and that mercy seat is Christ himself and his blood gives us access. So what did this do for my quiet time? It absolutely revolutionized it. Instead of looking at my watch and saying well I've got 10 minutes to get through my prayer list I simply knelt down and quietly meditated upon the fact that I was in the presence of the Lamb of God, my mercy seat, my blood-sprinkled mercy seat and because he gave me access I worshipped him.

Completely revolutionized my quiet time. My quiet time now became something not for me but something for him, something for him. The worship of my heart, the pouring of mouth of my heart to him in praise and worship adoration and with that came the conscious presence of that same Christ by his spirit in the closet.

During our years in Japan I had a friend with whom I often labored and he had a small Renault. It was a rental Renault that Renault car manufactured in Japan and he used to make his way around Tokyo in this car and in those days, in those earlier days, the Japanese were very anxious to get you to buy their gasoline. Any station you went to if you pulled in a whole army of attendants would descend on you and one fellow would wipe your windshield, another fellow would check your engine and check your water, another fellow would check your tires, another fellow had a little broom and he swept out the car.

You just had to get out of their way and my friend Julius was driving along in Tokyo and he saw a little light blinking on his dashboard and he knew he was short of oil. So he pulled into a gas station and he got out of his car and this great army descended on his car washing, wiping, everything and then he drove out of the gas station and blink, blink, blink. They checked the water in his radiator, gas, air in his tires, swept out the car, washed the windshield, everything but that which he wanted.

Is that your experience with the Lord? You do everything but that which he is wanting you to do. First, what is he seeking you for? He's seeking you that you might worship him. That's what the word of God says.

We're so busy, we'll study, we'll pray for others, we'll pray for ourselves, we'll give to missions, we'll go if he wants us to go and Tozer said you can have all of this without the Holy Ghost. You can have it all without the Holy Ghost. What is the first thing? The first thing is to worship.

To be occupied with the Lamb of God in worship and what is the Spirit of God doing? What is he doing? He's making you like the one you worship. He's making you like the one you worship. If I would have asked you before this series of meetings began, what is the one thing needful? What is the one thing to really concentrate on in your Christian experience? The one thing above all others.

What is the one thing that God is requiring from you? What would you say? Or if I asked you to take a piece of paper there and write down the one thing needful. Well, if you were a Baptist, you might say soul winning. Well, that's admirable.

Soul winning, witnessing, getting others into the church. This is the one thing, this is the primary thing, this is the great thing. The one thing needful.

If I maintain my passion for souls and my witnessing, all else will be well. It's the one thing needful. Or if you worship with a Pentecostalist group, you might have a different answer.

You might say the fullness of the Spirit, baptism of the Spirit. That's the one thing needful. Or if you worshipped in an Episcopalian church, you might say reverence for God.

That is the one thing needful, that I might reverence God. But instead of considering the different emphases in different denominations in our day, let's consider the Word of God. And I believe we can prove from God's Word that which is the needful in the experience of every disciple of Jesus Christ.

Now in Psalm 27 this morning, we read concerning David, David's experience. Now David was a truly remarkable man, an amazing servant of God. If you are fascinated by preaching, here is a great preacher.

If you are inspired by a great leader of the nation of Israel. If you are interested in soldiering, as many men are, here was the great soldier, the brave leader, the incomparable leader of Israel in battle. He was a great soldier.

He's an amazing man. He was a man, we are told, after God's own heart. Or if you are interested in kingly qualities, he's a great king.

The greatest king to ever sit on the throne of Israel. A great king. A wonderful man.

A man who commanded the affection of a whole nation and led them to victory again and again and again. A man of many gifts. But we, of course, think of him primarily as the incomparable psalmist.

What a man he was. Great king, great preacher, great soldier, great leader, great psalmist, you name it. But if you had said to David, what is your ruling passion? What is that for which you live? What is it that dominates you, David? What is the mainstream of your life? The great objective of your life? To be a great preacher? To convert sinners? He would have said no.

Not at all. Well, David, your passion must have been to be undefeated on the field of battle, to lead your men again and again to victory. Well, not really.

Well, it must have been to be the great king, sit on the throne. Oh no, not at all. It was not your ruling passion to be the great king? No.

It was rather, I think you might say, rather incidental. Incidental that you were a king, yes. And the leader of the armies, yes, comparatively.

Well, David, what was your ruling passion? We have it in Psalm 27, verse 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, just one thing. That's all. He just desired one thing.

But if he has this, he has everything. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire or to meditate in his temple. There you have it in one verse of scripture.

He says there is only one thing that he desires, but because he desired this one thing, all things become possible. This is the mainspring. This is that which sets everything else in motion and enables all else to perform as it was intended and to fulfill its appropriate function.

If the one thing that is needful is desired and sought, everything will fall into its proper place and will perform its proper function just like the mainspring of a watch. I recall on one occasion in a certain city in the southern United States looking at my watch. I thought, ah, it's rather early.

About 10 minutes later I looked at my watch again at the same time. Well, my watch looked the same. Same face, same hand, same case.

But it was useless. It had ceased to function as the maker intended. Why? Because the mainspring had snapped.

The one thing needful had ceased to function. It looked the same. It appeared to be functioning, but it was not.

The mainspring had snapped. One thing is needful. One thing must be central, and without it there can be no consistently effective ministry for Jesus Christ.

Now, Kyle and Illich in their great commentary have this to say about this verse. There is only one thing that David desires. It is an ardent longing which extends out of the past into the future and therefore runs through his whole life.

Now, I'm reading from a commentary which is regarded by most scholars as the finest of the Old Testament. This commentary is not just another commentary. What is being said here? It is an ardent longing which extends out of the past into the future and therefore runs through his whole life.

It was that which dominated David all his days. It's not just a momentary thing. It runs out of the past into the future.

And the one thing sought is unfolded. A lifelong dwelling in the house of the Lord, that is to say intimate spiritual intercourse. Intimate spiritual intercourse.

This is the one consuming desire of his heart. And then the commentators go on to say it is the one desire of his heart in order that he might behold and feast upon of a clinging, lingering, chained gaze on the pleasantness or gracefulness of the Lord. Isn't that surprising? David the man's man, the great soldier, the king of kings.

What does he want to do? He wants to behold the beauty and the pleasantness of the Lord. That's the one thing he wants. Everything else is relatively incidental.

Being a great leader, being a great king, being a great preacher, being a great psalmist. Only one thing really matters. Intimate fellowship with his God.

To be a true worshiper of God. This is his passion. Then in verse five he says, for in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion.

Now this is most interesting. What is he saying? If I put the first thing first and do that which the Lord desires more than anything else, the Lord will take care of me in my time of need. And he will.

Who do you care for most? The one you know loves you. Who do you share your secrets with? The one you know loves you. When the disciples wanted to know something from the Lord, who did they ask? John.

John. John, you asked the Lord. Worship of Jesus Christ, love for Christ, occupation with Christ is the main spring of the Christian life.

David knew it and therefore it was the one thing he desired. But then he says, that will I seek after. That will I seek after.

He knew very well, because this was the primary thing, he would never be able to achieve his objective unless he really sought for it. And nor will you my friend, nor will you, nor will I. Come to the end of a day and ask yourself, what have you done with your time during that day? What have you done with it? And how much time you set aside to worship Jesus Christ? And you'll be surprised. Of course, to worship him in your quiet time is not the end, it's only the beginning.

You're merely tuning up your instrument for the rest of the day. We seem to have this strange idea, that if only we can have a quiet time, everything's going to be fine for the rest of the day. And if we don't have a quiet time, it's going to turn out miserable.

That is not so. The time shouldn't be set aside early in the morning, but it's only tuning your instrument for the rest of the day. You can't say, I've had my quiet time, now I'm fine.

That's just the beginning, that's just getting into first gear. You're to walk in fellowship with the Lord during the day. This is the beginning, this is the tuning of the instrument.

C.H. Spurgeon said he was never out of Bible contact with God for more than 10 minutes. Little wonder that God used him so mightily. This great lover of Jesus Christ.

But you must seek after it. You'll never experience true worship in a consistent manner, unless you set your will to do it. You never will.

Now let's go on to the Apostle Paul. What was the passion of the Apostle Paul? I believe we all know what his ruling passion was, it's in Philippians 3:10. But I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the what? Fellowship of his sufferings.

Intimate fellowship. Being made conformable until his death. Now what did he mean when he said that I may know him? Did he not know him? Yes, as Savior and Lord, yes.

But he wanted to know him ever more intimately. That was his ruling passion. That was the first thing in the life of the Apostle.

Is it the first thing in your life? That I may know him. Apostle could say, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, that I may what? Win Christ. Christ was his goal.

To win Christ. To know Christ. To love Christ.

To have intimate fellowship with Christ. This was his ruling passion. And if that is not central, then duty becomes a drudge.

Duty becomes a drudge. Becomes a chore. But when Jesus Christ is central in your life, duty is a delight.

This is a day when we have become very clever at developing techniques. And a day when we are apt to be always urging people to witness. And what happens usually? They witness for a while, and then they stop.

And then they are exhorted to witness, and then they go a little further, and they stop again. But why do they stop? Have you ever noticed, in the Pauline epistles, he never urges you to witness. And he has nothing to say about fire and missions.

How interesting. Nothing. If you've got to constantly be telling people to witness, there's something wrong with the person.

If you've got to be always pumping up something to get people interested in fire and missions, there's something wrong with the people. What is Paul always doing? He's always bringing you to Christ, and leaving you with Christ. Let Christ be central in the heart of the man.

And what does he want to do? He wants to tell others about Jesus. And he'll tell them effectively. Let Jesus Christ be central in the heart of a man.

And what's he going to do? He's going to be burdened, and he's going to be troubled, because millions have never heard of Christ. It's going to disturb him, and it's going to bring him into action. What he needs is not more exhortation.

He needs Christ. And the Christ within him, that died for a world, will speak through him to that lost world, my friend. Without a true passion for Christ, nothing works consistently.

It loses its power. Instead of becoming a delight, it simply becomes a drudge. No, with the great apostle Jesus Christ was central in his life.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death. Now shall we turn to two women? Two women that we are, I'm sure, familiar with. Martha and Mary.

We shall turn firstly to the gospel of Luke chapter 10 verse 38. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he ended into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

But, and it's a big but, Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful. Now underline that.

These are the words of our Lord. One thing is needful. Mary hath chosen that better part which shall not be taken from her.

Here we are introduced to two sisters who are both very busy. You must not think that Martha alone was busy. Mary also was busy.

But both are concentrating on different forms of service. They are both very busy. They both heard the word of the Lord.

They both heard it. They both heard that word. And then the Lord comes to the house, and I want you to notice Martha's attitude to him.

It's very revealing. In verse 40 we find she rebukes the Lord. Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? She rebuked him.

Don't you care? You come into the house, you see what's happening, you see I'm doing all the work, and you don't care. Mary isn't doing anything. So the first thing about Martha we notice is that she has a what? A complaining spirit.

A complaining spirit. In other words, she is prey to self-pity. If she complained to the Lord and rebuked him, I wonder what she would do to others in the house.

I wouldn't like to be in that house. Then she gives him a command. Quite a girl, Martha.

Bid her therefore. You tell her to help me. Bid her therefore that she helps me.

Don't you care? Tell her to help me. Well, what did the Lord do? He completely ignored her. It's the only thing to do.

He completely ignored what she said. Thank God for that. He doesn't say to her now, Martha, I know you're very busy and it's just too bad that Mary isn't helping you.

Oh no, he's not going to feed that monster self in Martha, and he won't feed that monster self in you either. But if you don't keep close to the Lord, you will fall into self-pity and a complaining spirit. You can never satisfy self.

But what does he say? Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. Now underline things. Many things.

How these many things can infiltrate into a dear woman's life and trouble her. Things. Things.

We must take what the Lord gives us and be content. Things can smother you. And they were smothering Martha.

There are many things. For what the Lord gives you, be content. Not with the things, but with him.

The apostle Paul said, I've learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. Live for the Lord, not for things. You see, this was Martha's problem.

Careful and troubled about many things. And this was our Lord's assessment of Martha. And of course, it is accurate.

He now refers to Mary. But one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

He's not going to take that good part away from Mary. Now what was the difference between Martha and Mary? You hear some people say, well Martha was a choleric. She was the activist.

She's the person who works with her hands. She's born like this. She's built like this.

She couldn't be anything else. Mary's different. She's the melancholic, required, introspective type.

Meditative type. They're two different types. So Martha is obviously going to be an activist and Mary is going to be given to meditation.

But the scripture does not say that. What does the scripture say? There was a time in Mary's life when she made a choice and Martha had not made it. That's the difference.

Mary hath chosen. That's the difference. And that's always the difference between a person who is satisfied with Christ and the person who is dissatisfied with life.

One has made a choice. The other has never made it. How often do I have women who come to me and they say, well Mr. Cowell, you know I'm a Martha.

I'm a Martha. The kitchen's my place. The home's my place.

Looking after my family. I'm a Martha. I say, no you are not my friend.

You've chosen to be a Martha. God wants you to be a Mary. You never drift into being a Mary.

You can always drift into being a Martha. All you have to do is just let yourself go. No woman ever drifted into being a Mary.

Oh but you don't understand Mr. Cowell. You don't understand my responsibilities. I understand them very well.

I've lived in literally scores of homes in in the 40 years of my ministry. I lived in one home. On one occasion this woman had seven children.

She'd lost two at birth. She had a very unsympathetic husband. She had a large home to care for and in a spare time she attended to the hatchery.

I never saw her disturbed once. There was always the fragrance of Christ about her life and I marveled at it. One morning after a meeting in the city I was staying in her home during the meetings.

I rose about five o'clock and I noticed some light filtering in past the door so I opened the door very quietly and I saw this woman kneeling by her piano. I thought well maybe she heard a word from the Lord last night. She's a little disturbed.

She's risen early to seek the Lord. So I quietly closed the door but the next morning the same thing happened. The next morning same thing again.

So I said to her what time do you rise to seek the Lord? She said oh that's not my decision. I made a choice long ago that when he wanted to have fellowship with me I was available. There are times when he calls me at five.

There are times when he calls me at six and on occasion he'll call me about two o'clock in the morning. I think just to test me but always she would get up and she would go to a stool and there she would pray and worship her Lord. I said how long do you stay? Oh that's up to him.

When he tells me to go back to bed I go back. If he doesn't want me to go back to bed I simply stay up. She was the epitome of serenity.

The epitome of serenity. She made a choice but it wasn't easy for her to make that choice. But God had to take an idol out of her life before she made it.

But when he took that idol out of her life she was Christ's and Christ's alone. Oh yes my dear sister there's no excuse. Seven children.

Busy yes but not troubled. That's the difference. You can be busy and not be troubled and you cannot be very busy and be very troubled.

It all depends whether or not Christ is central in your life. We were created to worship Jesus Christ. We were created for him to become something to him in order that he might be satisfied with us.

But that demands discipline. That demands self-renunciation. That demands the mortifying of the flesh.

That demands the taking out of their lives everything that does not contribute to the one great objective. Now let us turn to John 11. Lazarus the brother is sick and he dies.

The Lord Jesus arrives on the scene and when he arrives in verse 20. Then Martha as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming went and met him. But Mary sat still in the house.

Here again you have Martha the woman of action. I must do something about this. I must go to the Lord.

Then said Martha unto Jesus. Lord if thou had been here my brother had not died. Now we might say good for you Martha that's wonderful.

This is a tremendous attitude of faith toward the Lord and it is. And these words were uttered by Martha not Mary. Lord if thou had been here my brother had not died.

What is she saying? If you would have been present you could have raised my brother from his bed of illness. He would have been well today he would not have died. This is tremendous and it is commendable.

And it's from Martha. And now she goes on to an even greater height of faith. But I know that even now whatsoever thou would ask of God, God will give it thee.

Even now she says. All is not lost. Well isn't that wonderful.

Martha the busy woman with the complaining spirit taken up with things. Well maybe she's come to the decision that Mary came to. I think not.

Let's turn to verse 38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus said take ye away the stone. Now the attitude of faith must become an act of faith. She has this attitude of faith.

Lord all is not lost. Whatsoever thou would ask of God, God will give it thee. Now comes the test.

Take ye away the stone is the attitude of faith to be followed by the act of faith. The profession followed by the performance. They're all gathered at the graveside.

And only one person speaks. And it's Martha. And what does she say? Lord by this time he stinketh for he's been dead four days.

Where's her faith now? It's one thing to profess. It's quite a different thing to perform. It's quite a different thing to perform.

What does it reveal to us? She had an emotional spiritual experience because she had an inconsistent devotional life. Underline that. She had an emotional spiritual experience because she had an inconsistent devotional life.

This is always true of a person with an inconsistent devotional life. They're up in the heavens today and down in the depths tomorrow. An unstable personality.

Unreliable. Lord you can do anything. You can raise him from the dead.

Oh no Lord. He stinks. It can't be done.

What are you? Martha or Mary? Have you ever made the decision? Have you ever chosen the one thing needful? The one thing that David chose? What was it? To be occupied with his God. And to seek for that. And to seek for it with all your heart.

Mary chose the better part and it was not taken from her. Now shall we turn to chapter 12 in verse 2. Now they made a supper there. They made a supper and Martha served.

But Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him. Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the bag and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, let her alone.

Against the day of my burying hath she kept this. What does this reveal to us? That the person who makes the choice, who puts the one thing needful first, shares the innermost secrets of the heart of the Lord. It is that person to whom he will speak.

Why? Because love demands a love of its kind. We would all agree with that. Love demands a love of its kind.

The Lord Jesus loves you with all its heart and he demands that you love him with all your heart. Not partially, but with all your heart. And until you do you will never know the sweetness of the love of Christ for you.

You will have some concept, but not a consistent measure. And he's not going to share with you the secrets of his heart. How many people do you share the secrets of your heart with? And to whom do you share them? To the person you know who loves you.

To the person that you know is committed to you. The person who's given himself or herself to you. This person you will be intimate with, but none beside.

And it is so with our Lord. There must be the response of love to love. She anointed him against his burying.

How did she know? He revealed it to her. None of the others knew. They didn't know.

But she knew. Isn't that revealing? Why did he reveal it? Mary had chosen. She knew what it was to have intimate fellowship with her Lord.

And she received a great reward entering into the deep feelings of his heart. Shall we pray? Heavenly Father, we thank thee for these words. We thank thee for the love of Christ who loved us and gave himself for us.

Give us grace, Father, to give ourselves to him for his sake. And this we pray in his name. Amen.

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