**Dear Beloved Saints in Christ Jesus,**

**Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father and from Our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

The text for our mediation this morning is from Luke Chapter 10. The last few weeks we have been going along the journey of Jesus closer and closer to Jerusalem. Last week Jesus reminded not only the lawyer in the text but also reminded us of a very important question. How am I justified? The short answer is that we Justified through the death and resurrection of Christ, who paid all our debts, and forgave all of our sins that we will ever do in this earthly world. The loophole was not just an answer, but a person.

It is kind of ironic that this passage coincides with a sermon I had about three weeks ago. Remember my soap box of how people treat the church like a country club? Sadly, it's back again, but for good purposes. One of the major points of that sermon was not to get distracted with the world, but focus on Christ. A great example in that text was someone looking back while plowing their field. Any farmer knows that if you take your eyes off the plow in front of you, it's not going to be a straight line whenever you look back. That is our life without directing it towards God.

Today in our text is another example of not getting distracted.

We have to think of the story of Mary and Martha in a catechetical or instructional type of Lense. This story deals with hospitality.

Martha in our text this morning is busy, but busy in the wrong type of hospitality. Throughout Luke’s gospel, there are normally three elements to Jesus’ table fellowship: teaching, eating, and the presence of Jesus.

Martha is not doing anything wrong. But she wasn’t treating Jesus like a wandering missionary. She was treating him as an honored guest, which wasn’t wrong. But the most fundamental part of the hospitality shown to wandering missionaries is to receive and hear the preaching of the kingdom of God. Here the Parable of the Sower is in the background. Mary grasps the one thing needed and Martha does not. For Mary has heard Jesus’ word ***“with a noble and good heart”*** (Luke 8:15), and she is included among Jesus’ mother and brothers who ***“hear the Word of God and do it”*** (Luke 8:21).

We need to go back to the Parable of the Sower again, for Jesus gives us this admonition, ***“Therefore take care how you hear: ‘For he who has, it will be given to him: and he who has not, even what he thinks he has, it will be taken away from him’”*** (Luke 8:18). And if you notice Martha never heard any of the words out of her Savior's mouth, instead she complains that Mary is not doing anything to help.

This brings out a real importance for all of us. Are we so busy in our lives that we leave no room for Jesus or His word? I won’t answer that for everyone. But as for me, I waste time scrolling through videos on my phone, which drives my wife crazy. I personally could use that time for scripture reading, and I bet some of us are in that same boat. Just imagine if we all switched the time doing other things, and read scripture and went to church? Not letting other activities get in front of worshipping God.

Martha was allowing other activities to get in front of worshipping Jesus. We all need to hear the words straight from the mouth of Jesus, He says, ***“.....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.”*** Often enough we are like Martha, we are anxious and troubled about many things that are not pertaining to Jesus. Here she wasn’t clinging to the words of Christ himself, unlike her sister Mary who did.

And that is what Jesus is saying when He says, ***“but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”*** The one thing that is necessary is the Word of God. The catechumen Mary in this instance is showing hospitality to Jesus by faithfully receiving the Word of God. That is what we also do with the faithful reception of the Word of God.

In the first part of Luke’s Gospel, it says, ***“that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.”*** Receiving the word rightly is how we receive certainty in what has been taught to us.

Jesus is telling us that His teaching is that the good portion that will not be taken away. Isaiah 40 emphasizes that point, for the prophet says, ***“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”*** We have to remind ourselves that Scripture will always be standing forever. Other things are going to flatline and go away.

The question that we have here is, are we supposed to first serve the Lord or first to be served by our Lord? Think about that for a moment and think about it in a liturgical context.

Mary has the correct liturgical theology. She is sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear the divine words coming from His mouth. Instead of trying to serve Jesus first, she is first served by Him. And that is the truth for all of you. You were served by God, and He made you an heir of God. And then throughout your life you get to serve Him. It is also why this service today is called a Divine Service. We are served by God through His gifts, of forgiveness through Absolution, hearing the Word of God, and being blessed with The Lord’s Supper. And at the end of service, you go out into the world and serve God in your various vocations.

Hospitality to Jesus is first expressed through the faith in the Words of Jesus, where the gifts of God’s kingdom will be found, primarily in the Lord’s Supper and Baptism, but also in Scripture.

And after receiving those gifts, certainly there will be time for an expression of hospitality in due time. Think of the story of Simon-Peter, where his mother-in-law was ill with a high fever. First, she was served by Jesus, through healing, and then she went and served Jesus and his disciples.

This story of Mary and Martha shows all of us that when the kingdom of God is near, we have to choose the “good portion” in the absolute sense – good above all others. The posture of a Christian in which one receives Jesus’ divine service is not simply being busy, but actually clinging to the words of Jesus, for Faith is the highest worship.

May we cling to the words of Jesus, knowing that He has called us children of God, and that He served us first, so that we could serve Him.

**In the Name of Jesus. Amen.**