**“One Thing”**

**Psalm 27**

Genesis 18:1-14

Colossians 1:21-29

**Luke 10:38-42**

 Pentecost 6, July 16/17, 2022

From Psalm 27: “One thing have I asked 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 gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple.”

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

**Bridge**

It’s fairly encouraged that we each have a favorite Bible passage. “Confirmation Verses” are, often, how young Lutherans (at least here in the United States) formalize that **selection of a key (favorite) verse**. My confirmation (and favorite) verse is the assigned Psalm for the day (number 27, and especially that first verse, but it leading also to the rest): “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

I lent my favorite verses and Psalm to David Lyons two weeks ago … and then He died from complications from the car accident that he and his wife Estelle went through. But Psalm 27’s comforting and strengthening words were what I, first, read to him in the Emergency Room. He wasn’t thinking too clearly, so I didn’t **there** ask him what **his** favorite passage was, but I shared mine, and I think he liked it.

**Text**

That Psalm culminates in two places. The final is **instructive**; the first is **how you get to that point**: “**Waiting for the Lord**” (the last verse tells us); “**be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!**” And **how one gets to that ability**, that’s that first summary (verse 4): “**One thing have I asked 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 gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple”. On hospital beds or emergency room gurneys, one gets **focused (desiring for the second thing in “strength and courage and the Good pleasure of God”)** so **exerts oneself fairly fervently on “seeking Him” as, maybe, one hasn’t with that sense of urgency before**.

You are, obviously, not hospitalized nor on an emergency room gurney. Perhaps its, too much, a “topic for later” to gain that urgency for “strength and courage and the Good pleasure of God”. Perhaps things are going well for you: work or school is fine, home’s safe and secure, daily things are rewarding so you feel “rewarded”. Some of our youth are just now back from (what’s called) the “National Youth Gathering”. Hyped-up from that they likely are and, with them, parents and adults more apt to attend their churches this weekend (as the trend goes). Mid-summer re-attachment to the Sunday worship of God gets chosen also by others, to re-connect where we should be always, but with an energy this divine way like many of the summer’s Sundays have not had for you.

We’re given Martha and Mary to examine, sisters who Jesus visits in their home. Looking like a casual “visit”, the “**Visitor**” here makes for the significance. Jesus sits in your living room and you have a choice of rooms to, yourself, be in. The kitchen makes **some sense**. You think you’re **hosting** yet you’re told of a **turn of duties** that **flips this scenario entirely upside down**.

Another example might be: you’re **driving your car** and Jesus stops you wanting to climb in, yet **He asks to drive** … and you have to **respond to that request**. You have much to say to this guest but He **prefers you not talk yet** **… just listen**. **He makes supper** after (with words) **expressing Himself extensively**. He came and comes “**to serve and not be served**”. Worship rightly wanting to be done stands **on hold** as **HE WORKS** and you’re just asked to sit or kneel or lay down at His feet and **take all He gives**. …..

I don’t know how your day is going so far (or your week has been). I’m guessing that lunch plans are among your thoughts, cooking and/or picnicking and then back to some grind on Monday with (for some of our youth) no more gathering with 35,000 other youth pepping you up (like that size group did for them at the National Youth Gathering), just home and regular things. But Jesus has you **PAUSE**.

For Estelle and David Lyons (a few weeks back), their Sunday morning activities had no conception of what would happen Tuesday late morning, with their car hit, head on, by a dump truck. They had no idea **what they would need “strength and courage” for that week, “light and salvation” and a “stronghold” to hold onto (and literally hold onto) for what was to come**. History is, now, history and **they did need that stronghold** … and **IT / HIM / JESUS** (as it turned out) was the “**one thing needful**” for that risky week.

There’s no way of knowing what lies ahead for you in this coming week. Mine may be quite personally challenging, and “strength” from God / Jesus might be (in hindsight, after the fact of whatever might occur) my **One, best, foundation, so I best take in, from Him, all that He’s willing to prep me with**.

Jesus and His gifts have always been that for me (the only real, effective, option for it). My serving Him won’t grant me what **His serving me does**. **Mary’s posture at Jesus’ feet, her listening / her receiving from Him was more useful than Martha’s scurrying about in the kitchen by miles and miles and miles** **… and that’s what Jesus told** **her**.

**Application**

We have a **RHYTHM** for **that very thing:** **how to receive from Jesus “strength and courage and the Good pleasure of God” for our weeks (the way to get these “capacities” from Him)**. A “Sabbath’s **rest**” is, **first**, (before the week) weekend’s (**first morning of the week / Sunday morning**) practice and habit that puts us with Mary on her seat upon the floor in her living room before anyplace else (right there, **most importantly**, at the feet of Jesus who sat in her living room and shows up still in places, bestowing Himself in gifts to those who sit beneath Him).

We **acknowledge this: that place and posture** (and that acknowledgement written to remind us in the big box every bulletin, every week … and I read the beginning of it, so follow it with me):

*“****Our Lord speaks [here] and we listen. And His Word bestows what it says. Faith that’s born (by Promise) from what is heard then acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise* (which is the worship and peace we put into practice in our week). After the Jesus divinely serves us of Himself is where the fruits of His Word and Meal take over in times even bad where, still, we can be at peace and honoring God the Father in all our responses to them*. The gifts of Jesus’ service to us include the Holy Supper in which we receive His true body and blood to eat and drink.*** …….

I have heard it said that **“evangelism (or the Word spoken to unbelievers) is for bringing them to, then, baptism into Christ’s person and work / into Him with all His blessings of being in Him**”. But for those **“baptized (and already there) the spoken (and delivered through Promised Means Word) is for keeping us blessed / AT TABLE, blessed and nourished as He Himself serves Himself through His Holy Supper, there we eat and drink of His body and blood given and shed, then, of a world who’d receive it**”. We’re **evangelized to baptism**. We’re **delivered, from there, to Jesus’ table and His food of Himself**.

Our **RHYTHM** is culminated in this life **at the table of Jesus’ Word and it in bread and wine**, and it’s **there** that a maturing and hungry for it Christian **gets what the Lord wants, most, to give to us of Himself**. What happens there is (most definitely) the **receipt of His best gift**. ….

Jesus never **condemned** Martha’s efforts. But He did compliment the **hunger and** **priority** **that** **Mary showed to gain what she wanted most (and first): to (however that shows up to be given us) “dwell where the house of the Lord is in the Christ” … and there “gaze upon the beauty of the Lord [un-distracted], inquiring in His Temple” of divine skin**. “Mary had **chosen** the **GOOD PORTION**”. And, **Martha** (or any **Martha characteristic** in us fighting a helpful **Mary** **characteristic** in us): **that GOOD PORTION will not be taken away from her”**.

In +Jesus’ name, Amen.