

Sixth Sunday in Lent, Palmarum
Confirmation
March 25, 2018
St. Luke 10:38-42
The Holy Spirit has Set Before You the Good Portion
Rev. George Ferch

Dear friends in Christ, especially you, Abby, Madison, Gretchen, Grace and Caroline,

Among the reasons you are here today is Jesus has been a regular guest in your homes. Your parents and you have invited, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest," just as Martha called our Savior and friend to join her and Lazarus and Mary. It is an amazing thing for Jesus to grace our families with his presence. We are blessed with his presence now for your big day.

Being with Jesus on a regular basis is something you have done since your parents brought you to the baptismal font. The Son of God who became a human being to suffer and die for you and the world is no stranger. Thank you, parents, for bringing your daughter to Jesus, and keeping her close to him.

Jesus is your friend, your brother, your Lord and Savior. In a few minutes you will confirm your saving faith in Jesus. You will promise to die, as all of us who were confirmed did, rather than turn away from Christ; to say, "Jesus, you no longer are welcome in my heart."

You intend to keep your promise and you will ask God to help you. How will the Holy Spirit enable you to do this? He will do it as you faithfully make use of the means of grace, the gospel in Word and sacrament. What you need continue to do is stay close to Jesus; sit at his feet and listen to his word like Mary. Mary did not miss the opportunity to listen when the Holy Spirit set the good portion before her. **The Holy Spirit has Set Before You the Good Portion.** Jesus' word is the one thing necessary. Jesus' word will not be taken away from you.

One way to express genuine love for Jesus is to serve him. At the end of the Service of Word and Sacrament the pastor exhorts, "Serve the Lord with gladness." That is what Martha was doing. The mistress of the house loved Jesus, was excited to have him stay with them. What better way to show Jesus true love than race about preparing a wonderful meal? We will answer that question in a little bit!

Martha is a good example of how we may serve Jesus with the busyness of activity; not only at home but in the congregation. Mothers and fathers taking care of their families in God's love is serving the Lord. Being an honest worker, a dedicated student in school are fruits of faith is serving Jesus. Applying those old chestnuts "time, talents, and treasure" for the church is actually serving Jesus in true love. Jesus does not condemn us for being "worried and concerned about many things." Our Savior did not condemn Martha either.

Such loving service in action is a good thing. You young ladies will be getting busier with things in the days ahead. You are going to be worried and concerned about many things in the coming years. You will have lots of all kind of activities and plans on your plates.

The Lord will give you those opportunities as ways to serve your Savior in love both in your homes and in your church. God has prepared good works in advance for you to do. He has saved you by grace, through faith, and this faith as a gift of God, so in humility you can serve Jesus with those good works.

But there is only one thing necessary among all that activity. Jesus' word, his teaching, is the one thing necessary. There is the answer to the question what is better than all that service. It is sitting with Mary at Jesus' feet listening to him tell you over and over that God forgives your

sins in him. It is hearing that you are no longer a stranger living in fear, but a daughter of your heavenly Father living in peace.

When you were younger, maybe now, there is a favorite story you like to hear, or read over and over. Or, you have someone you like to listen to when they speak. Jesus' word more than anything else is the good portion of what you need to hear time and again. The Holy Spirit has set Jesus word before over these past years. God willing the Spirit will continue to do so. You need, we all need, to be Mary; to choose that good portion, the one thing that is needed, sit down, and listen.

Jesus' word is not only the one thing necessary, it is the thing that will not be taken away from you. It will not be taken away from you because you have written it in your hearts. It will not away because the Word of the Lord Endures Forever; this is the meaning of the Latin words with the beginning consonants on our window, VDMI.

It is interesting, and meaningful, that the Greek word 'logos' translated here 'word' and in some translations 'teaching' is the same word used for the eternal Son of God in John's gospel. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The word cannot be taken away from us because nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ. The word will remain with you because the word is eternal unlike everything else.

Think about the situation with Jesus in the home of his friends. The food and drink would go away. They would wash and dry the dishes and put them away. Even the good full feeling of a delicious meal would pass and hunger would come again. All those things will pass away. But the Word of God Mary heard from Jesus' lips would take root in her heart and stay with her. It is with her still in heaven.

Things and people will come and go in your lives. You will see how fragile life is and how swiftly pass possessions and fame. People will give you things and take things away. Some treasures will rust and decay. The one thing that is eternal is your Savior and his Word. They are in essence the same. No one can snatch your Savior from your heart. If you remain determined and committed as Mary was to make listening to the word your top priority, the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Someone sent me an article about why young people are leaving the church. The write made this suggestion, "Their profession of faith was more about what was expected and culturally applauded than what was real and life-defining." That is a judgment that may or may not be true of individuals. I do know that is not why you are making your profession of faith today. You are making it because the Holy Spirit has set before you the good portion and you have listened.

My prayer, our prayer, is that you continue to listen to the Word speak his word. That you always will come and sit at his feet when Jesus invites you, "Abby, Madison, Gretchen, Grace, and Caroline, come and be my guest." Amen. <SDG>