

December 28, 2025 Year-End Worship Service

“Only One Thing Is Necessary”

Luke 10:38–42

by Ptr. Yoon Kuk Hun

Scripture Reading

38 Now as they were going along, Jesus entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and was listening to His word.

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she came up to Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.”

41 But the Lord answered her and said, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things;

42 but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Introduction

Today is our year-end worship service. The year 2025, which has been filled with many things, will finally come to an end this week. When you look back over this past year, what kinds of thoughts come to your mind? I believe that throughout this year, each of you has surely received abundant blessings from God.

Now, although it is December, December is also called *Shiwasu* in Japanese, isn't it? This word originally comes from the image of Buddhist monks in December. Monks who normally walk slowly are said to run about busily during this season, and from that image this word was formed. At the end of the year, it is not only monks who are busy, but everyone is busy, so it is an easy word to remember—you think, “Ah, that makes sense.” Yes, in our daily lives, December can be said to be an especially busy time. Looking back on the year and preparing for the new year, it is a season when both our hearts and our bodies are busy.

Even in the Scripture we read earlier, there appears a busy person. It is Martha. Although it was good that she welcomed Jesus, the picture of her being conscious of her busyness seems to me to be just like the picture of us ourselves that we easily fall into when we are busy. Therefore, on this year-end worship service today, I would like us to listen to the words that Jesus speaks to those who are in the midst of busyness.”

Main Point 1: Martha's Issue

38 Now as they were going along, Jesus entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

In this passage, the sisters Martha and Mary appear. It is said that Martha was the older sister. The name "Martha" has the meaning of "mistress" or "female head of the household," and as the one in charge of the house, she must have been able to welcome Jesus wholeheartedly. However, it seems that this Scripture passage is not recorded in strict chronological order. Luke records the story of Martha and Jesus as something that follows on from the preceding passage about inheriting eternal life. This passage may be used as a message from Jesus to those who would receive eternal life.

Now, this Martha welcomed Jesus. From this fact alone, we can see that she believed in Jesus. It says "they," but how many people were there in this group? On Jesus' journeys, His disciples were with Him. But it did not stop there. There were also people who supported Jesus' travels. It is not clear whether such supporters were present at this time, but if they were, then this group would have been quite large. And yet Martha invited such people into her home. There is no doubt that she truly loved and admired Jesus.

Now, in order to welcome many people, preparation is necessary. Of course, food is needed for the number of people. A large space is also needed. Cleaning must be done in haste. What about drinks? Furthermore, in that time, it was proper manners to prepare water for washing the guests' feet, so water and towels were also needed for each person. Welcoming Jesus into her home was joyful. But there were so many things that needed to be prepared. This was Martha's situation.

39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word.

While Martha was like this, Mary sat at Jesus' feet and was listening intently to what Jesus was saying. She seemed to have no interest at all in Martha's busyness. Martha tries deliberately to make loud noises. Even then, Mary does not move. Then perhaps she says out loud, "Oh, I'm so busy, so busy!" Even then, Mary continues to listen to Jesus' voice. Finally, Martha takes action and appeals directly to Jesus.

Let us consider Martha's state. Martha was in the midst of busyness. That busyness seemed to her to be something very important. Since she was serving Jesus Himself and His group, trying to serve them with all sincerity appears to be something wonderful. However, within that busyness, Martha's issue becomes clearly visible. "Do You not care?" In these words, we can see Martha's issue. That

issue is **complaint**. She was able to welcome Jesus. And yet, within her, there was not satisfaction or peace, but complaint.

Main Point 2: The Object of Complaint

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she came up to Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.”

From Martha’s words, we can see the objects of her complaint. First of all, it is her younger sister, Mary. “My sister has left me to do all the serving alone.” Martha seems to think that the cause of her busyness is that her sister is not helping her. This is curious. Why did she not say this directly to Mary? If what she was doing—busy preparing—was truly the right thing, then she could have said so directly to her sister. But she did not do that. Instead, she hoped that Mary would notice through Jesus. We cannot say for certain what kind of thoughts were in her heart, but it is clear that this is not an action from which we can easily sense love toward her sister. Even though she was in the honor of welcoming Jesus together with her sister, what she directed toward her sister was not love, but complaint.

Next, the object of her complaint is Jesus Himself. “Do You not care?” Let us imagine the feelings contained in these words. Because she was welcoming Jesus, her sister Mary was not helping her at all. On top of that, Jesus did not even scold her sister. *What was all my effort for? I am doing this for Jesus, and yet doesn’t He understand me at all? Why won’t He rebuke my sister? Why doesn’t He understand how hard I am trying? This is just too much.* Surely thoughts like these were in her heart. *Why doesn’t Jesus understand me, even though He should? I am working hard for Jesus.* Such dissatisfaction was there. That dissatisfaction likely changed the joy of welcoming Jesus into irritation.

Finally, the object of her complaint is the present situation itself. “Tell her to help me.” She worked with all her strength. And yet, the situation did not change. Even though she was giving her all to what she believed was right, to work done for Jesus, the results were not following. No matter how much she worked, nothing changed. No one acknowledged her. *Even though I am trying so hard.* Jesus does not help me, and my sister does not help me. *Why has it come to this?* When she looked at the present situation, her dissatisfaction must have appeared as irritation.

Now, how did you receive Martha’s complaint as you listened to it? In our own walk of life, complaints like Martha’s occur quite often. Why do we worship? Why do we sing praises? Why do

we offer prayers? It is because we love the Lord. It is because the Lord speaks to us. It is because we desire to hear the Lord's word. That is why we worship, pray, praise, share with one another, and laugh together. And yet, when we are in the midst of busyness, do we not tend to forget that joy—the joy of the Lord being with us? Even though we should be tasting the wonder of welcoming Jesus, we find ourselves unable to feel joy. At times, we become aware that we have quietly ended up in such a state.

Just the other day, we celebrated Christmas. Christmas worship, the candle service, Christmas gatherings—together we rejoiced in the birth of Jesus who came among us, and we were able to spend time sharing in that joyful news. There is a phrase that comes to my mind every Christmas: *Christmas fatigue*. It is a phrase I heard from a professor during my days as a seminary student. I was taught that we must be careful whether something called “Christmas fatigue” is appearing within the church. The church rejoices in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is only natural that we put special effort into Christmas. Many gatherings are held. Much preparation is done. Worship is always special, but among them, we keep an especially special worship service. Busyness increases. This is a wonderful thing. It overflows from the desire to rejoice wholeheartedly in Christmas, in the birth of Jesus. However, before we realize it, in the midst of that busyness, we tend to lose sight of what is essential. And so we become worn out. This is what is called Christmas fatigue, and it is said to be something that occurs, often without notice, among many churches and pastors.

Being busy is not a bad thing. If it is busyness for the sake of faith, all the more so. Busyness itself is never evil. However, when we are in the midst of busyness, our hearts often become unsettled. And before long, we forget the reason why we are busily moving about—namely, welcoming Jesus.

Martha's issue, her dissatisfaction, has its cause in losing sight of what is most important. Welcoming Jesus, and making preparations—both are important. But why do we welcome Jesus? Why do we desire to serve Him? It is because we want to be with Jesus. It is because we want to listen to His voice. It is because we want to see Him. It is because we desire that Jesus be beside us. Keeping proper manners and sharing good food—these are important things. But the most important thing is to walk together with the Lord. It is to seek what it is that the Lord is speaking to me.

Main Point 3: To Those Who Are in the Midst of Complaint

**41 The Lord answered her,
“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things;**

42 but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

What does Jesus say to Martha, who is in the midst of busyness? The words of Jesus in this passage seem to be filled with gentleness. That is because Jesus accepts everything about Martha—her busyness, her issue, and even her dissatisfaction. “You are worried and troubled about many things.” He knows her condition, the whole of her thoughts. And on that basis, Jesus speaks to her: “Only one thing is necessary.” Jesus does not explicitly define what that one thing is. However, He says that what Mary chose is what is necessary.

39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word.

What Mary chose—the one and only necessary thing—was to sit at the Lord's feet and listen attentively to His word. What is necessary for those who welcome Jesus is nothing other than to listen to the Lord's voice, to give full attention to His word, and to focus on it. A luxurious meal, water prepared for washing, or any kind of preparation made to ensure comfort—none of these are included among the necessary things. For those who welcome Jesus, there is only one thing that is necessary: to be near the Lord, at a distance where one never departs from Him, and to listen attentively to His word.

Pastor Mark Batterson, well known as the author of *The Circle Maker*, writes the following about the Lord's speaking in his book *Whisper*:

“Nothing has the potential to change your life like the whisper of God. Nothing can have more influence on the direction of your life than your ability to hear God's still, small voice. Through it, you are able to discern what God considers good, what pleases Him, and what His perfect will is. And through it, you are able to know and understand the mission God has given you.”

The Lord whispers. He whispers right beside me, in a voice that only I can hear. Unless we concentrate, we cannot hear it. If our hearts are captured by anything else, we cannot sense that the Lord is with us. And if we are too busy speaking our own words rather than listening to what the Lord is saying, the Lord's whisper will be drowned out. Even though He is with us, if we cannot focus on the Lord and our hearts are troubled, we cannot taste the joy of the Lord being with us. What we need is to listen carefully to the whisper of the Lord who is with us.

The name of our Savior is called Immanuel. Its meaning is “God is with us.” Why is the name of our Savior something that reminds us that God is with us? It is because we must not forget that the Lord is with us. The Lord is with us and is the One who helps us. Hopeless realities always stand before

us. Busyness presses in on us. Have we forgotten? What it is that makes us busy? And who it is that is with us?

The Lord speaks to us: “Only one thing is necessary.” It is to listen to the Lord’s voice. In this year-end season, do we have thoughts like Martha’s in our hearts? Are there worries? In the midst of busyness, have we forgotten the Lord? Have we neglected to listen to the Lord’s word? Shall we not remember the Lord? Shall we not remember that the Lord is speaking to us? What we need—what those who confess that they love the Lord need—is only one thing: the voice of the Lord.

Conclusion

The year 2025 is drawing to a close. Let us once again read the theme Scripture that we confirmed at the beginning of this year—**Psalm 1:1–4**.

- 1 Blessed is the one
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stand in the path of sinners,
nor sit in the seat of scoffers.**
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and in His law he meditates day and night.**
- 3 He
will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither;
and in whatever he does, he prospers.**
- 4 The wicked are not so,
but they are like chaff which the wind drives away.**

The year 2025 for Tsuchiura Megumi Church began with this word. Desiring that the Lord’s instruction would dwell among us, we began this year. And now that year is coming to an end. In the past, in the present, and in the future, may we be those who sit at the Lord’s feet and listen attentively to His word. May we be those who never forget the one and only necessary thing that Jesus taught us.