

## Choosing the best part– Sunday January 27<sup>th</sup> 2013.

<sup>38</sup> *Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; 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." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; <sup>42</sup> but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38-42*

Beloved in the Lord,

Life presents us with many choices. Every choice we make comes with its own consequences and outcomes. Many of the choices we make daily have little or no lasting consequence, but some have eternal significance.

As we begin this new calendar year in our congregation I would like to delve a little into today's Gospel reading, which tells us about a day when Jesus dropped in on his friends Martha and Mary. We have looked at this event before but the great thing about God's Word is that every time we read it with an open heart we receive some new insight from God.

I have given today's sermon the title "Choosing the best part". Many people go through life and never receive the best part. They miss out because of the poor choices that they make along the way. These people generally have a very negative outlook on life and seek to blame someone or something, when in reality the problem usually lies within themselves. Poor choices lead to a poor life.

The very first Psalm gives us a very clear comparison between two possible paths we can take in life. Contrasted are those who walk with God and those who do not.

### **The Righteous and the Wicked Contrasted.**

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor stand in the path of sinners,  
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so,  
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
But the way of the wicked will perish.

This is so clearly and beautifully stated. We all have the choice to make in life as to which path we shall follow. We can walk the way of the righteous sticking close to God and His Word, or we can walk the worldly carnal path. Each path has consequences. The righteous path leads to a blessed life here and in eternity, the worldly path leads to an unfulfilled life here and eternal misery and condemnation for ever in hell.

It is of vital importance that we understand that God does not force any one to walk the way of the righteous. God being a righteous God, does however make clear to us the consequences of the choice that we make. He clearly tells us what is right and what is wrong. He spells out for us the consequences of righteous living and evil living.

This has always been the way. Back in the garden of Eden God gave very clear instructions to Adam and Eve regarding what was allowed and what was forbidden. He also warned that disobedience would lead to death. Satan appearing in the form of a serpent deceived Eve. He put a doubt in her mind as to whether God would really do as He said. He said to Eve: "You surely will not die." Eve pondered this thought and lost the right perspective. She did the unthinkable and took from the fruit of the forbidden tree, ate of it and gave it to Adam who also ate of it. We know only too well the consequences of their disobedience. The whole of mankind was plunged into sin and death.

It is so important to maintain a right perspective at all times and to never doubt God's Word. It is so important that we obey God at all times, that we keep our focus fairly and squarely upon Him.

When we divert our attention off God and His Word, we are in big trouble.

It is important to understand that this diverting of attention is not always temptation to sin. Martha is a good example of that. Jesus has dropped in for a visit. Martha being a houseproud person and a good host went into overdrive immediately. She was concerned about how to cater for Jesus. That in itself was not a bad thing, in fact a good thing, but the problem was that she lost her perspective, and in her fluster she even had a go at Jesus: ***"But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; 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.'"***

I can relate to Martha and I am sure that most of you can too. She has the kettle on, the piragi are in the oven, she hasn't had a chance to do her hair or makeup, the house is in a

mess. No warning – Jesus just suddenly knocks on the door. So much to do, only two hands, where do I start? Where is that sister of mine? Oh, sitting at Jesus feet!! Great! She loses the plot. I can understand and you can too. We have all been there when things overwhelm and we lose perspective.

I love Jesus gentle rebuke: ***“Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; <sup>42</sup> but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”***

What a great blessing it would be to each one of us if we got the meaning of Jesus words. If this truth would be imbedded in our hearts. Only one thing is necessary. What is that one thing? Jesus gives us a clear answer in the Sermon on the Mount. ***“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*** (Matthew 6:33)

If we accepted this truth as our guiding life principle, how blessed and free our lives would be. We would live life on a completely different level.

***“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”***

Put God, His Kingdom, His Word as number one in your life, and everything else will be taken care of. God has promised it! This is what it means to choose the best part for yourself. Putting God above all else is the best thing you can do.

When you are faced with a choice God or something else – choose God.

When you have to choose whether to walk God’s path or the world – Choose God’s path.

This is spelled out for us in Psalm 1 as I already mentioned to you.

The choice is ours and very often we must make the choice multiple times a day.

Life very often ends up at a fork in the road, and we are presented with options. We need to ask for God’s guidance and direction every time. That is why I have always loved the Hymn: “Take Thou my hand and lead, O’er life’s rough way, With Heavenly manna feed me from day to day. Without Thy grace and favour I go astray, Take Thou my hand O Saviour, Choose Thou my way.”

Every time we are faced with a choice, we need to ask God first. Ask Him is this Your will for me?

This pleases God, when we live in such a way. It pleases Him, when we train ourselves to walk in His guidance, by His Spirit. He desires for us to live daily with this child like faith and dependence upon Him. When we do we are confessing our faith and trust in Him. We are confessing that He know what is best and that we believe that He has our best interests at

heart. In essence we pray this in the Lord's prayer when we pray for God's Kingdom to come, for His will to be done, for Him to supply our daily bread.

God knows better than we do what we need and what is best for us. If we daily trust in Him, then all will be well. There is a song in Latvian that says that the safest place to be at all times is in God's Hands under His care and provision. When we stay close to Him, then we are secure. When we don't we are in trouble.

As you know we have a young pup at home called Zac. Being a Westie and young he is very curious and active. When he obeys me and stays close he is secure, when he goes on his own way he gets into strife. For example, despite many warnings, and a pool fence, he broke through and fell into the pool. Sure I got him out, but his experience was traumatic. Hopefully a lesson learnt.

God has placed boundaries because He loves us. He will save us when we fall, but we must never ever presume upon His grace.

Our salvation comes at a tremendous cost. It cost Jesus His blood. God freely and lovingly gave us His Son to save us.

***"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16***

Let us thank Him every single day for His love and grace. May we choose the best part every day.

Someone put it so well: "God's Word is daily bread and not cake for special occasions. Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.