

“ONLY ONE THING NECESSARY”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: LUKE 10:38-42

GOD’S WORD: AMOS 8:1-12

I – WHAT ARE WE MISSING?:

As I look at the world today the question that keeps coming to my mind is “What are we missing?” We are falling apart at the seams and it doesn’t appear like we have an answer for it. We have all kinds of problems but no solutions.

Mass shootings take place in our country on a regular basis and we’re now seeing a trend to file charges against police officers who didn’t just rush in with guns blazing. This puts the blame on someone but it doesn’t answer the question of why these shootings occur in the first place. Our drug overdose rate continues to climb every year but instead of figuring out why we just keep throwing money at it and continue funding agencies and programs that haven’t worked yet. The teen pregnancy rates had been declining but are now climbing again. We’ll support the babies and mothers but when will we ask why and take steps to stop it? We fear sending our kids to school because we have teachers who think it’s okay to use them for their own personal pleasures. We launch programs to curb teenage smoking but then approve devices that contain the same chemicals that cause disease and death for them. In Cleveland and Columbus there are shootings every day and now we see them creeping into areas like Mansfield and Marion.

We need to find the solution and implement it fast or we will continue the downhill slide until we are no longer a society we want to live in. We have to figure it out because our leaders aren’t going to. They suffer from the same problems. All I see is hatred and one side trying to undo the other. They’re too busy fighting one another to give us any meaningful solutions. If we had as many solutions as we’ve had hearings we may have gotten some things done.

II – THE SOLUTION:

I want to suggest to you this morning that we have the solution. That the Church of Jesus Christ has the answer to all the problems of the world. We call him Jesus! We have taken him out of our communities...out of our homes...out of our schools...out of our government...and we are now reaping the benefits. We are more concerned with worldly pleasures and being politically correct than we are with telling the world the Gospel. Somebody please explain to me why we can light up the government buildings in Columbus in recognition of Gay Pride week but I’m not allowed to put a nativity on the Town Square? Why is the world allowed to celebrate but the church isn’t?

Unfortunately the church has become irrelevant to a good number of people today. They have been bombarded by everything but the Gospel. They watch the tales of sexual abuse unfold and wonder why they would want to be a part of that. They watch the arguments take place over human sexuality and see

no grace or discussion, but a lack of grace, courtesy, and as real dialogue to try to understand each other. Why become part of that – you might as well run for office! The church has been good at finding fault, but not very good at showing the love of God to one another.

I guess we should have seen it coming. It was prophesied a long time ago. In the Scripture you heard read this morning I find one of the scariest prophecies I see in the entire Bible. God is telling the Israelites he's had about all he's going to take. That they are ripe for the picking. In other words He's had all he can take and the end is near. If you read down through this passage it is all about the fact the greed has overcome goodness. The people are so busy taking advantage of one another that they have forgotten all about God. That the oppressors of the poor have broken God's law, denied God's justice, and trampled on God's people. And God tells them he has a perfect memory. None of their evil deeds will be forgotten by him. The singing will stop the earth will tremble, the sun will fail and there will be bodies all over the place.

But the worst of the prophecy is in verses 11 and 12:

¹¹ "The time is surely coming," says the Sovereign LORD,
"when I will send a famine on the land—
not a famine of bread or water
but of hearing the words of the LORD.

¹² People will stagger from sea to sea
and wander from border to border
searching for the word of the LORD,
but they will not find it.

I think this is the worst of the prophecy because I think we are seeing it happening in this time in history. I celebrate how God has blessed us with all the youth and children we have and the teachers who are making sure they aren't going hungry looking for the Word of God. But I know those who are starving are more than those we are feeding. The worst part of this whole prophecy is that people will stagger around this whole nation and not be able to find a word of hope from the Lord, but believe that God has abandoned them.

III – TEXT:

The mission statement of The United Methodist Church is to "MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD." How would you grade the church on accomplishing this mission? It appears to me that the church has not been putting much emphasis on discipleship. It would almost seem to me that we have been "MAKING DISCIPLES OF THE WORLD FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST."

It is this lack of discipleship that has allowed the followers of Jesus Christ and his church to lose their ability to influence others and transform the world.

In this morning's text I see Jesus showing us this principle that discipleship is more important than other activities and things. Listen to this familiar story of a couple of sisters.

Luke 10:38-42 (NLT)

³⁸ As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

If you've been in the church long you have heard this story preached many times and with many angles. This morning I want to tell you that this is a story about discipleship.

Jesus has come to the house to rest for a while and a woman named Martha has invited him in and made him feel welcomed. She is a good hostess. He and his group of followers make themselves comfortable and Martha sets out preparing a meal for them. Her sister though takes a different approach. She sits down and listens to Jesus teach like the rest of his followers do. We know this is a story about discipleship because the phrase "sat at the Lord's feet" was a technical term used to show a disciple learning from a rabbi. Martha on the other hand was "distracted" by the big dinner she was preparing. She was pulled away from God by the work she was doing. She thought it was pretty unfair that her sister got to sit and listen while she did all the work and she told Jesus as much.

When Jesus answers her she gives her a mild rebuke, but calls her "dear" as he does it. He shows concern because of his diagnosis of her soul's condition of being worried and upset. Having anxiety over the dinner and housework which pales in comparison to her being a disciple and being a follower in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus wants his disciples to be nourished by his words, not just by food in their stomachs.

IV – YOUR SOUL:

As John Wesley led the early Methodist movement, which later became our denomination, he taught his leaders to ask their followers at every meeting, "How is it with your soul." Before the people who gathered for the class meeting, or the camp meeting, or the annual conference set down to a potluck dinner, he wanted to know that their discipleship was on track. That they had refrained from sinning. That they had visited the sick and those in prison. That they had contributed to the cause with what they could afford,

that they had taken communion, prayed, and received teaching on the Bible. That nothing was bothering them or coming between them and their Savior.

They were also quizzed on their behavior for the week and their regular attendance at meetings. If it was not up to par they were not allowed to attend again until they got their lives back on track. They were supposed to be disciples of Jesus Christ. People who picked up their cross daily and lived a life that showed Jesus to others. People who were still human but had found and lived the grace and faith they received from their Lord and Savior.

And this path of discipleship by the early Methodists, the followers of Jesus through John Wesley, changed the world. The Church of England was corrupt; it shut out people, and was in need of reform. But what do you expect it was started by a king who wanted the church to approve wonderful things like murder and divorce. The French Revolution had occurred and its royalty decapitated. John Wesley is credited with stopping the same thing from happening in England. That his path of discipleship kept the masses from carrying out a similar uprising.

With a group of dedicated disciples, those who took the teachings of Jesus Christ seriously and tried their best to follow them, they changed the course of world history.

V – ONLY ONE THING:

It would appear that the world is once again in need of disciples to change the course of history. I know it looks bleak from time to time, that it appears the inmates are running the institution that we are on a serious downhill slide. But I don't believe it's time to throw our hands up in the air and give up and just wait for someone to finish pushing the self destruct button. But it has been proven many times that disciples can change the course of history.

The only thing needed to put things back on track is a new and fervent faith in Jesus Christ. That a group of people, all over this nation, would quit worrying about their individual churches and kingdoms and start worrying about the Gospel, and THE KINGDOM.

John Wesley said "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out."

Amos said it...John Wesley said it...will we allow it to happen? How's your discipleship? Ready to change the world?

AMEN