

## One Thing

Sunday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1990

### Psalm 27:4

*One thing have I desired 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 behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

This is going to be a very easy title for you to remember. The message is entitled: “One Thing.” I’m going to use as a text, Psalm 27: verse 4. I’ll be using several texts.

David wrote in Psalm 27:4, “*One thing have I desired of the Lord, (just one thing), and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, (or in the presence of the Lord), all the days of my life, to behold the beauty, and the glory of the Lord and to enquire in His temple.*”

I don’t know when David wrote this Psalm; I don’t have the faintest idea. I don’t know whether he wrote it when he was a young man, middle-aged man or an old man. I do know this, when he wrote it, he was a wise man. Yes, he was a wise man. He had narrowed everything in this life down to one thing. That is what he had done and that is what he said, “*One thing have I desired of the Lord. That one thing I seek after.*” He had narrowed everything in the world, everything in the future, and everything in life, down to one thing.

I thought about David. He was a shepherd, he was a writer, he was a warrior, he was a king, and he was a popular man among men. Evidently, he was acquainted with and had experience with about everything the world had to offer. Wouldn’t you say that? David went from being shepherd in the field to a king on a throne. He had experienced about everything the world had to give and was acquainted with most everything of any importance.

Yet, considering all these things, he exclaimed one thing; “*Just one thing have I desired of the Lord.*” There is one thing that I must have. There is one thing that I will pursue and seek after. David said, “That I may dwell, may be accepted, may stand in the presence of the Lord, and that I may be seated in the presence of the Lord.” David desired to be accepted of the Lord in His fellowship, in His communion, in and in His house. “I want to behold His beauty, to behold His Holiness, to behold His glory and to sit at His feet and learn of Him.” That is the one thing that I want.

Somebody said this one time; “No man will truly succeed at anything until he has dedicated himself to one thing.” Spiritually, that’s true. I’m going to show you that. I’m

going to show you how, that spiritually, no man or woman ever succeeds or is happy or has any fulfillment, spiritually speaking, in anything. They won't be happy until they are obsessed with, separated to, and dedicated to one thing. I'll show you that in the scripture.

First of all, we are going to turn to Luke 18:18. A rich young man, a rich young ruler, came to the Lord Jesus Christ. He said to Him, "*Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*" Our Lord met him, right here on the ground that he chose to stand on. "He met him where he was coming from," as the young people say.

Christ said, "*Why do you call Me good? There's none good but God.*" "If you want to do something to earn eternal life keep the commandments, perfectly and holy." He said, "Oh, I've done all that." Christ said, "There is one thing thou lackest. You've got riches, honor, acclaim, popularity, and morality. You lack one thing. Go sell what you have and take up your cross and follow me and you will have treasure in heaven."

My friend, here is a man, who according to the world has everything. He is rich, he is healthy, he is popular and he is powerful. He is moral, educated, has great influence and he has youth. These are the things that people want more than anything else. Yet, our Lord told him that all of these things were too important to him. The Lord told him to put them aside and take up his cross and follow him. That is the one thing that he lacked.

Tell me what you own? Some of you are pretty wealthy. Some of you have houses, land and a lot of other things. Tell me what you own and what you have in this world. I'm sure you have a safety-deposit box that is full. I'm sure you have deeds to lands, houses, rental property and cars. All of these possessions will burn. There won't be anything left, someday, but ashes of everything you have. "*One thing thou lackest.*"

Tell me what you have done? I want to know about the honors you have required and all of the good deeds you have done. I want to know about all the duties that you have performed. I want to know about all of these good things that you have gone about doing. Tell me what you have done. Do you know what our Lord said about it? This is "*Wood, hay and stubble.*" This is all going to burn.

Tell me what you know. Some people have many degrees. Some have a BA, BS, MA, from this world's education. Do you know what the Bible says about the wisdom of this world? The Bible says, "*It is foolishness with God.*" These degrees are utter foolishness.

We look back on history two or three hundred years. We look at the people back then and say, "They sure didn't know what we know." I'm telling you, one of these days,

people will look back at us and say, and “Those people sure were dumb; they didn’t know anything.”

Tell me about your goodness and your righteousness. God calls it, “*filthy rags.*” What do we do with filthy rags? We burn them. “*There will be not left one stone standing on another.*” I’m telling you this, our Lord looked on that rich young man, moral man, educated man and powerful man. He said this, “You’ve got a whole lot but you lack one thing. Lacking that one thing makes all you have useless. So, if you are wise, you will part with all these things to which you have given your whole life and you would follow Me. That is the one thing you lack.” You see; Moses knew that. The scripture says that Moses “*Esteemed the reproach of Christ greater treasures than all the riches of Egypt.*” Moses even esteemed the reproach of Christ and following Christ, in poverty and reproach. It was better than all the treasures of Egypt.

I warn you my friend; you may not care what I think. You may think that my warnings are useless. That is all right. I’ve been here a long time and I have preached a long time. I’ve traveled to a lot of places and I have known a lot of people. I do know this; I warn everybody listening to me who is taken up with the cares of this world and the riches of this world and the possessions of this world; these things will perish. “*The fashion of this world fadeth away.*” These things will burn. Follow Christ, know Christ, love Christ, believe Christ and serve Christ. That is the one thing that you lack. Lacking that one thing makes everything else useless. Lacking it makes you utterly, and totally useless.

Here is another scripture, Luke 10:38. There were two sisters, Mary and Martha. These ladies loved the Saviour. They knew Christ. Our Lord often visited their home. This home was a little home in Bethany. In that home lived Martha (the older sister), Mary (the younger sister), and their brother Lazarus. Do you remember Lazarus? Christ raised him from the dead. Our Lord came to this house and this was a house that welcomed Him. He visited it frequently. Our Lord was fed and they were His friends. In fact, when Lazarus got sick, they sent the word to Christ and said, “*He whom Thou lovest is sick.*”

So, He was there one day, visiting them. The scripture tells us that Martha welcomed Christ into her home. “*She received the Lord into her house and she was cumbered about with much serving.*” I’ll tell you what she was doing; she was fixing dinner for all of them. She was fixing dinner for the disciples and the Lord. She was so busy and was probably getting flowers to put on the table. She was setting the table and putting a new tablecloth on it and started putting the chairs around. She was cooking the meal, fixing the bread, the desserts and all of these things. She was going around, like they use to say; “She’s going around like a chicken with its head cut off.”

Mary, her sister was sitting in the room at the feet of her Lord. She was sitting there and looking up into His face. The scripture said that, she was "*Hearing His Word.*" Martha came into the living room where the Master was seated with the disciples. I imagine that she came in with her hands on her hips. She was a little steamed up. She said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister sits here at your feet, while I serve and work and labor to feed everyone? Don't you care if she doesn't help me?" Our Lord looked at her and said, "Martha, Martha, you're careful and troubled about many things. Martha, one thing is needful. One thing is imperative. One thing is necessary. It is not your trouble and care and cumbersome ways and your service. That is not the one thing needed nor the food that you are preparing nor all the effort that you are putting forth. It's not the beauty of the service or the beauty of the table. One thing is needful, Martha, and Mary has chosen that one thing, sitting at My feet, hearing My Word. It will never be taken away from her. What you are doing will come and go. What she is doing, she will never lose."

Martha is a picture of this religious world in which I am living. This world is organized, troubled, careful, cumbered with much service, activities, and entertainment. This world is going and doing. There are social activities, ballgames, potluck suppers, and choir practices. There is much doing about nothing, quite frankly! There are censuses taken, entertainment and everybody has a microphone stuck in their mouth and are screaming in it. Our Lord says, "Oh, to all who claim to be His children. One thing is needful."

It's not what you are doing that is needful. One thing is needful and that is to sit at the feet of Christ and hear His Word. Do you know of anyone that is interested in that? Is there anyone doing that? We need to hear His Word and we need to sit at His feet and worship Him. Can't you see Mary there? She's just looking up into His face, adoring Him and thankful for Him. She's listening to His instructions and listening to His Word. She is feeding and feasting on every word of the grace that is falling from His lips.

Martha is in there running around. She's killing chickens and doing all of these things. She's trying to take care of the temporal things. We need to wait on the Lord and to wait on His grace. We are too busy serving Him to be served by Him. Did you know that? Nobody is hearing anything.

I remember hearing, when I was growing up, about a little boy down in Alabama. He was walking down the road and had a lunch kit and an armload of books. A man met him and said, "Son, where are you going?" He said, "I am going to school." The man said, "What are you learning in school?" He said, "I ain't learning nothing in school; I'm too busy going to school to learn anything."

I think we're too busy going to church. I think we're too busy playing games. I think we're too busy entertaining folks. I think we're too busy passing out cards and trying to get folks signed up. We're running around in buses and going to entertainment parks like Kings Island. I think we're just too busy going to school. We're not learning anything. I warn you; I warn those who are so active and so busy. I warn those who are so careful and troubled and so cumbered about with much care that they are neglecting the one thing that is needful. Sit down and shut up! Listen to His Word.

Do you know anything about the Word? My Lord said, "*The Word will judge you.*" Do you know anything about the Word? How long has it been since you just sat down and shut up? How long has it been since you slowed down and sat at the feet of the Lord and worshipped Him? You will probably say, "We're serving the Lord." He said, "*If I needed anything I wouldn't ask you.*" He said, "*I came not to be ministered unto; I came to minister and to give My life a ransom for many.*"

Thirdly: In John Chapter 9, our Lord had healed a blind man. This man was blind from birth. The Pharisees got around this fellow. They knew him and he had been blind since birth. They crowded around him and tried to get him to deny that Christ had healed him. They didn't like the Lord Jesus Christ. They didn't want Him to have all the glory. They didn't care who got the glory, just as long as He didn't. They didn't want His name to be praised and His name to be glorified.

They gathered around this fellow and they said, "Give God the praise, not this man Jesus Christ. Don't give this Jesus Christ all the glory." They said, "Give it to God or give it to somebody. Just don't give it to Jesus Christ." This fellow looked at them and said, "*One thing I know, I was blind, but now I see.*"

He could do nothing about his condition, nothing. He had no ability or power to do anything about his condition. If this were left to him, he would still be blind. His parents couldn't do anything for him. They loved him but they couldn't help him; He was blind. He was in absolute total darkness. The religious people couldn't do anything for him. He was blind. It was beyond their help and hope and care. His friends could do nothing for him. He was blind. This man Jesus Christ came to him and touched his eyes and now he sees.

You can say what you want to but there is one thing he knows; "*He was blind and he was dead in trespasses and sin.*" The Bible says in Ephesians, "*You are without God in this world, without hope, and without help.*" Religion had been around him all this time. There were well-wishers, loving neighbors, family and friends. Nobody could ever or would ever help him. They couldn't help him and he couldn't help himself.

But, Christ came and because the Lord Jesus purposed to do it, He came. There is one thing that He knows. Christ made him whole. He did it all, from alpha to omega, from beginning to end. He's the author and finisher of my life and my sight and my hearing and my faith. He is all! You see, "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He was wounded for my transgressions and by His stripes I am healed. He died the just for the unjust to bring me to God. He came into this world to save sinners of whom I am chief.*" He chose me; I didn't choose Him. He called me; I didn't call Him. He cleansed me; I didn't cleanse Him. He converted me; I didn't convert myself. "*To God be the glory, great things He hath done.*"

I refuse to give any man any glory for anything that God has done for me. How about you? There is one thing I know; "*I was blind.*" I was stone blind and He came along of His own will, by His own power, for His own glory and He made me see.

I'm like the elderly lady who heard John Newton speak. She told him after the service, "Well, I'll tell you this, the Lord saved me and He will never hear the last of it. I'm going to praise Him forever." He'll never hear the last of it. "*Unto Him who loved me and gave Himself for me, and washed me from my sins, in His own blood, to Him be the glory.*" We are not going to share it.

We've heard our Lord speak to a worldly man, "*One thing thou lackest.*" We've heard Him speak to a believer, "*One thing is needful.*" We've heard a man's testimony, whom God hath made whole, and "*One thing I know.*" He did it all!

We're going to hear from an apostle. We're going to hear from a man that God chose and whom God revealed Himself face to face. We're going to hear from a man whom the Lord taught the gospel, the apostle Paul. In Philippians 3:12-14, he says, "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" I'm not where I am want to be, I'm not what I want to be, I'm not what I'm going to be. I haven't arrived, "*But this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind.*"

I tell you, this is so important. I need to forget my sins; they are under the blood. I'm not going to brood about them or brag about them. Are you with me? I'm forgetting my sins, forgetting my works, forgetting my errors, forgetting my misunderstandings,

forgetting my falling outs and forgetting any injustice. I'd be the greatest psychiatrist in the world if I could teach people to forget.

Paul said, "I forget those things which are behind and I reach forth. That is one thing I do; I reach forth unto those things which are before." What is before me? His Word, His promises, His grace, His people, and His will are before me. This one thing I do; I'm not living in the past, I'm forgetting what is behind. I'm turning my back on it. I'm like a runner running a race; I'm not looking to see how far I've come or who is following me. I'm not looking to see who is gaining on me; I am looking to one end. *"I press toward the mark of the prize of the High calling of God in Jesus Christ."* I am going to cross that finish line. That is the one thing that I do.

That is what I am interested in and that is the one thing that I care about. I don't care about how far I have come. I don't care who is with me or how far that I am ahead of someone else. I don't care if they are gaining on me. By His grace, I expect to finish and cross the line, and I expect to attain the prize.

Paul said, "Brethren, I am an apostle, I will tell you this about me; I haven't arrived. I'm not perfect. I haven't laid hold of that for which my Lord laid hold of me. I will tell you one thing that I do. I'm forgetting the past; I reach to Christ. I reach to His people. I reach to His Word and I reach to His promise. I am pressing toward the mark of the prize of the High calling of Christ my Lord."

This brings me to this last thing that David said in Psalm 27, *"Because one thing have I desired of the Lord."* I have no claim on it. I have no right to deserve anything or to desire anything of the Lord. It will be a gift if I receive it. It is of the Lord. Eternal life is His gift. If I have eternal life, He will have to give it to me. *"One thing I want and desire above all things; I desire this of the Lord; that I may dwell in His presence."*

I'm not talking about an in and out adventure in religion. Folks run in and get saved today and lost tomorrow. They get on a mountain today and a valley tomorrow. David said, *"I want to dwell in His presence all the days of my life."* That is what I want. *"I want to dwell in His presence all the days of my life. I want to behold His beauty and His glory."*

Now, here is the important thing; *"One thing have I desired of the Lord."* Listen to these five words, *"That will I seek after."* Do you desire this one thing enough to seek after it, to go for it? Do you? I will tell you where to seek it. You seek it in His Word, in the preaching of the gospel and among His people that know Him. I am going to seek after Him.

