

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
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**Tenth Sunday after Trinity, August 16, 2009**

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Hymns: 630, 226:2, 366, 291, 48.

Lessons: Genesis 18:1-14, Colossians 1:21-29, Luke 10:38-42.

Text: Proverbs 2: 1-8.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, dear fellow redeemed,

Did you notice what Mary in our Gospel lesson chose that is really important? In this specific example, Mary's sister Martha was concerned about the things of this world. When Martha was disappointed that her sister was not helping with earthly preparations, Jesus said: ***"but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*** Luke 10:42 NIV. ***"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*** Luke 10:42 KJV.

Everyone has spent lots of time learning. Children are born knowing nothing but sin, having been conceived and born in sin. And everyone over the age of 5 has spent lots of time learning from other people as well as their parents. At age 5 we send our children to school to learn. What are our children and grandchildren going to learn? You could all tell me something – some of you different things, but a few things would come out in all your lists, things like Reading, Writing, Math, and Science. Is that all you need? If you were listening very carefully as I read our sermon text from the Bible, you would realize that you need one thing more.

In our Gospel lesson you heard about Mary and Martha. When Jesus was invited into their home, Martha was concerned about serving Jesus. Can't you just see her straightening up the house, and arranging furniture so people could listen to Jesus and maybe even getting a meal ready?

***"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38-42 NIV. "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke 10:42 KJV.***

You've probably heard the story about the man who said that he used the time sitting in church to plan his coming week. He found that quiet time an opportunity to mentally make lists and decide what to do the next week. He wasn't listening to what was happening and wasn't concentrating on the Word of God.

Our Sunday Worship is the most sacred time of the week and we want to be able to concentrate on God's Word and give all our fellow worshippers the opportunity to do the same thing. I think you know that means that you won't want to do anything that will distract you or others from God.

So what is it that we are supposed to gain?

**STORE UP GOD'S WORD WITHIN YOU**

1. ***"Then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God."***
2. ***"For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."***

The book of Proverbs piles up words used for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. A number of different words are used to make sure that the reader and the hearer don't miss the point.

And the point starts with verse 1 of our text: ***“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.”***

We live in a society where children do not necessarily learn how to make a living from their parents. In much of the Old Testament history, that is how children learned: They learned from their parents: Boys learned what their fathers did for a living, and girls learned what their mothers did in the home. But today we have sort of institutionalized that. Sons don't automatically follow the paths of their fathers. Daughters don't automatically follow the paths of their mothers. We send our children to have others teach them, and so there are many hours a day when we don't actually know what our children are being taught. That's one reason, children, why parents ask you “what did you learn in school today?”

But our public schools are forbidden to teach our children the most important thing. They are not allowed to teach about Jesus Christ and what he did for us. For many years Christ Our Redeemer was permitted to have a Christian Day School for our children in grades 1 through 8. But now we must be involved – all of us – in the religious education, the Christian education of our children.

In public schools, our children can learn something of the first chief doctrine of the Bible. So what are the two chief doctrines of the bible? The Law and the Gospel. In summary, the Law shows us our sins, and the Gospel shows our Savior from our sins.

But in public schools, children learn only the law, rules that you must obey, the laws of the land. The emphasis is not to show us how wicked and sinful we are. That use of the law comes only from God's Word: One outstanding example of learning what the law of God teaches us is found in Psalm 51:5 (NIV) ***“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”***

The other chief doctrine of the Bible is the Gospel, which tells you that, although you are a sinner, God saved you from your sins by sending his only Son Jesus Christ: first so that he could live a sinless life because you can't, and then to be punished for your sins and for the sins of all mankind. It is by believing in that Lord Jesus Christ that you are saved.

Parents, do you know what your kids are learning in school?

The curriculum, yes, But also the extra curricular - not just the formal extra curricular activities but also what they are learning in the halls and from the words and actions of fellow students, teachers, and staff.

What are your children learning in school? Just one example of this is how Christian parents are often shocked when their children come home with new vocabulary words not used at home.

What are your children learning in school? What literature are they reading? What is available and especially what is “required reading” for them?

So, children, when mom or dad ask “what did you learn in school today, you may have an answer. Or you may say “nothing” and go about what you have to do. But I hope you will share with them.

But when your parents ask “What did you learn from God’s Word today?” I personally hope and pray you can tell them something: A bible passage you memorized. A part of the small catechism you’ve memorized. Or what you heard from a Bible History lesson. But when and where did you learn that? You must take time, or more importantly, your family must make time to put God in your lives, to put God’s Word into your lives.

But parents, this means you have to do your job, too. *“Train a child in the way he should go.* Proverbs 22:6. Bring up a child in the way he should go. God tells us in Deuteronomy 6: 6-9 (NIV) *“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”*

And, of course, you must not only teach the commandments, for they only teach the Law of God. You must also teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is summarized in the passage sometimes called the “Gospel in a nutshell”: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”* John 3:16-18. And how many other passages have you adults memorized that your children have not yet memorized?

So some of you have learned great wisdom from God: Our text said *“For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”* What about the Reading, Writing, Math, and Science that your children are learning? I can guarantee you that there will be things that they learn outside of the home, outside of the Christian influence of you parents that are not words and ideas that come from God. Just one word: “evolution” says so much about ideas that don’t come from God! Our text tells us what is important and why: *“For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.”*

Mary chose the one thing needful in our Gospel lesson. Jesus said near the end of the sermon on the mount, *“But seek first [God’s] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”* Mathew 6:33. What things? Jesus has just been talking about food and clothing, covering for our bodies. But mark well what he says is really important: The kingdom of God and his righteousness. His kingdom is given to everyone who believes. Jesus rules in the heart of every believer. But we must hear the Gospel to believe it. *“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”* Romans 10:17 NIV. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Romans 10:17 KJV.

The book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom and a discussion of true wisdom: Just one example: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding,”* Proverbs 9:10 or, as the NIV reads: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”* Proverbs 9:10 NIV.

Jesus warns us in Matthew 6:19-21: *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* May God’s word truly be your treasure every day.

STORE UP GOD’S WORD WITHIN YOU! *“Then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.”* *“For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”*

With the hymnwriter we pray:

“Abide with richest blessings  
Among us, bounteous Lord;  
Let us in grace and wisdom  
Grow daily through Thy Word.

“Abide with Thy protection  
Among us, Lord, our Strength,  
Lest world and Satan fell us  
And overcome at length.

“Abide, O faithful Savior,  
Among us with Thy love;  
Grant steadfastness and help us  
To reach our home above.” Amen. (TLH 53)