

**Serving In
Contemplation
Of
Christ Jesus**

(Consider Christ Jesus)

From a Transcribed Sermon

by

Dan Gordon, Pastor

Home Missionary Baptist Church

Serving In Contemplation
of
Christ Jesus

(Consider Christ Jesus)

Copyright © 2017

by

Danial Gordon
and
Home Missionary Baptist Church

From the transcription of
Sunday Service, April 2, 2017

Edited by Mark Smith

All Rights Reserved

Consider Christ Jesus

INTRODUCTION



The emphasis of the book of Hebrews is, *Christ is better*. He is better than religion and religious forms. Taking it further, Christ is better than anything. Therefore, consider Christ Jesus.

The Greek word “consider” has its root in the Latin word for “star”. The idea being, to contemplate the stars. *Consider* suggests the idea of the astronomer, patiently, persevering, with very concentrated gaze, looking upon the stars, seeking to know more and more about them. ***That's what it means to consider Christ Jesus.***

Hebrews 3:1. *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christian Jesus."* In this verse we are exhorted, we are urged, we are encouraged, to be doing something; *Consider Christ Jesus.*

In this message, Pastor Gordon explains that when God's people “consider Christ Jesus”, we will stay focused on Him. He explains how we should consider Christ Jesus in our service to the Lord. We need to stay focused on WHO we serve and guard against being distracted by WHAT we are doing to serve God. We need, always, to consider Christ Jesus.



Consider Christ Jesus



Hebrews 3:1, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;" This message will be taken, for the most part, from another passage, but Hebrews 3:1, establishes our thought. In this verse we are exhorted and encouraged to consider Christ Jesus. In doing that, faith is always strengthened and there's more of a motive for perseverance or endurance. We're called to live a life that reflects Jesus Christ. Our life is to be a life of service to the Lord. In other words, we are to serve God in our life. Consider Christ Jesus. That is a necessity, an absolute necessity, for faithful service to the Lord.

This flows into verse 2, speaking of Christ Jesus, "Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him." It's talking about the faithful service of Christ. Consider Christ Jesus. Consider His faithfulness to God.

To consider Him is to keep Him as the emphasis in all that we do. It also prevents the things mentioned later in Hebrews 3. In verses 7 and 10, there is hardening of the heart. Considering Christ will prevent that. In verse 12, we have unbelief. Considering Christ will prevent that as well. Also in verse 12, we have a departure from God, which is connected with unbelief. Considering Christ prevents that also. In the latter verses of Hebrews 3, we see the failure to enter the land of Canaan, or the failure to enjoy God's blessings, a failure to enjoy God.

Each of these is possible while in the very act of serving the Lord. In the very act of serving God, our hearts can be hardened, we can be guilty of unbelief, we can be departing from God, we can be moving farther from God, even though

Consider Christ Jesus

everything looks good. We can actually be moving farther from God even in our service. Certainly we can fail to enjoy God in the very act of serving. These are real dangers in our service to the Lord. In order to prevent these dangers, consider Christ Jesus.

Earlier, in "Living In The Contemplation of Christ", we looked at considering Christ just in life. Now I want to look at "Serving the Lord In Contemplation Christ Jesus". Our service to the Lord may involve different things for each of us. No matter what our service to the Lord involves, consider Christ. Do not lose sight of who we are serving. That is very easy to do. I fight and struggle with that often. In all our service to the Lord, Christ must remain the chief focus. The service can not be the chief focus. The One we're serving must be the chief focus.

In light of all that, there is an example of considering Christ in the very act of serving the Lord beginning in Luke 10:38. *"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*

In this passage there are three characters. There is Jesus, he's the teacher; Martha and Mary, who are the objects of the lesson being taught. We know from John 11, concerning Martha and Mary, that they are sisters. They had a brother named Lazarus. We learn they live in Bethany. John 11 tells us that Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. They were very special

Consider Christ Jesus

to Jesus Christ. In Luke 10, Jesus has entered Bethany and Martha received Him into her house. I'm sure that He frequently visited this house or this family. This particular visit is recorded by Luke. He writes that they entered the house with Jesus. "... *now it came to pass as they ...*", Indicating Luke was obviously there as well.

In these verses, Luke takes us inside the house, allowing us to see and hear what transpired between Jesus, Martha, and Mary, for the purpose of our own learning. It's sad that so many miss the lesson that is being taught here. It is for our admonition, a warning, and instruction for anyone who serves the Lord. This isn't for the lost. This isn't even for those who profess to be saved and do not serve God. It is for those who serve the Lord. What took place in that house is certainly a lesson about service to the Lord, but more importantly it is a warning concerning a danger in serving the Lord. That danger being that we fail to consider Christ.

I believe Martha has been treated unfairly just from this one passage. I think I have preached about this before. This is one event in her life. If you read John 12, she doesn't make the same mistake again. This is one event. Many times even that is misconstrued.

The account begins with Jesus entering Bethany and Martha received Him into her house. Consider the spirit of Martha and Mary in receiving Christ. There is no doubt in my mind from reading John 11, that Christ was greatly loved by Martha and Mary. They both highly esteemed Jesus Christ. From John 11, it's obvious they both recognized Him as their Lord, as their Master. Both Martha and Mary believed in Christ, were faithful followers of Jesus Christ, and had a proper spirit and attitude toward Him. He was very special to them, there's no doubt about that.

Consider Christ Jesus

Martha received Him into her house. It was quite dangerous at that time. It would take great courage to receive Christ into the house. I'm sure they were both very happy that Christ was there and very excited He was there. They both welcomed Him and embraced Him.

Without a doubt, both Martha and Mary had a desire to honor Him on this occasion and considered it a privilege that Christ had come to the house. Both of them looked at it as an opportunity to have Him there. Martha saw it as a privilege and an opportunity to prepare a meal for Him. There's nothing wrong with that, nothing wrong with that at all. She saw an opportunity to serve the Lord and wanting to do so, her thought process was, "I'll make Him a meal." There's nothing wrong with that. Be careful what you criticize Martha for here. People miss the point. Mary saw it as a privilege and opportunity to sit at Christ's feet and be taught.

Martha and Mary saw it as an opportunity, they desired to honor Christ that day, they desired to serve the Lord, and they desired to give Christ their very best that day. It's important to remember that Martha and Mary both served Christ that day. They both did something special that day and were both very earnest in what they did.

We read, in our scripture, of Mary that she sat at Jesus feet. We read concerning Martha that she had much serving. She was serving much. She was serving the Lord. The problem is not with what she was doing, not with her making a meal for Christ. She had much serving. I believe that she did it with a desire to honor Christ. She did it with a desire to please the Lord, out of love for Jesus Christ.

There was nothing wrong with what Martha chose to do and there was nothing wrong with what Mary chose to do that day. Mary felt compelled to sit at His feet. There's nothing

Consider Christ Jesus

wrong with that. Martha felt compelled to serve Him by making provision for Him. Again, there is nothing wrong with that. They both took advantage of Christ being in the house and they felt a stirring of heart to do something for Christ. But as you read Luke 10:40, you read those two words, "... *but Martha.*" There was a problem.

As you read the account, it's very plain to see that Mary ended up enjoying the occasion more than Martha. Both were serving, but Mary ended up enjoying it much more than Martha. Christ would commend Mary, and He would very gently, really out of pity, rebuke Martha. It wasn't a stern rebuke, but "*Martha, Martha.*" There was a sympathy in the rebuke.

Let's look at the service and where it fell apart for Martha. We read in Luke 10:39, concerning Mary, "*she sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.*" Then in verse 40, concerning Martha, "*But Martha was cumbered about much serving.*" Again, the "much serving" is not the problem here. Christ commended Mary in verse 42, "... *Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*" He sympathetically rebuked Martha there in verse 41 and 42.

As people read this passage, many miss the point by misrepresenting Christ's rebuke of Martha. It's very important that we realize that the problem is not much serving. You can't serve God too much. The problem was "cumbered about much serving." That's the problem. The word "cumbered" means she was pulled away. That is, in her serving she was pulled away from Christ. She was distracted from Christ. It's very easy in serving the Lord to become distracted from Christ. It's very easy to do.

As a result, she became over burdened with her serving, "... *cumbered about much serving.*" That was the rebuke, "cumbered about." While Martha was busy serving the Lord, she

Consider Christ Jesus

wanted to please Him and honor Him. In verse 41, Jesus, in present tense says, "*thou art careful.*" That is, she was worried and anxious. "Martha, you're so worried, you're so anxious, and troubled." She became distressed and agitated. While serving the Lord, she got in this condition. To continue on, it says, "*... thou art careful and troubled about many things.*" You see, her mind is on "many things," not on Christ. She lost her focus and her mind now is on the serving rather than the one being served. That's very easy to do. I struggle with it all the time.

The phrase, "But one thing," in verse 42, is part of the rebuke as well. Now that "one thing" has to be taken in the contrast to "the many things." That is what Jesus is doing. He is contrasting the one thing to the many things. Her problem was many things. That's her focus. He said "one thing" in contrast to "the many things" is needful. That is, it's indispensable, it's all important, it's paramount. "*Mary hath chosen that good part,*" suggesting that Martha had missed out on what Mary had made her priority.

Now what did Mary make her priority? Christ. Somewhere along the line, the priority for Martha became serving rather than Christ. We can not lose sight of Jesus Christ. You want to get worn out and discouraged in serving God, lose sight of Christ. You can keep on serving, but you won't enjoy it. You won't get much blessing out of it. The blessing comes in considering Christ.

What Mary did was a blessing. What Martha did became a trouble to her. Again, the problem isn't in the serving. Keep Christ as the emphasis. That's true in our life and it is also true in our service.

We see here that Mary's full attention was upon Jesus Christ. Martha's attention had been diverted. Her attention, now, is more on service than it is Christ. I'm not saying that she

Consider Christ Jesus

has completely forgotten Christ. Obviously she hasn't. But, the emphasis is now the service rather than the one being served. Mary was completely focused upon Christ, while Martha was more focused on the task at hand. There's a big difference. Mary was completely enthralled, thoroughly impressed with Jesus Christ. I believe Martha was too, at the beginning. But somewhere along the line, the service, the act of serving became the primary focus.

Mary is in awe of Jesus Christ. Completely taken up by His person. Martha is in awe of the work that needed to be done. That's a struggle. We need to be in awe of who we are serving, not so much in awe of what needs to be done. It's just a matter of emphasis.

As Mary sat at Jesus feet, she could see the One whom her soul loved. She could see the One that meant everything to her. While that's going on, Martha is scurrying about. As she is scurrying about, she is losing focus upon Jesus Christ. Eventually, all she can see is what needs to be done.

Mary worshiped Christ. Martha became so bogged down by her service, that she didn't have time to worship. That is a very great danger. We can become so bogged down in service to God that we do not have time to worship the One we're serving. Our service ought to be an act of worship. Mary sat at Jesus feet, fully aware of His mercy, His grace. Martha was cumbered about much serving. Be careful that our service does not become a distraction from Him.

There are those that say, "None of that makes sense to me. What you're saying just doesn't make sense." If that is the case, you have fallen into "in awe of the service" rather "in awe of the person." We can examine it personally by asking the question, "Do we enjoy serving the Lord or is it a drudgery?" We enjoy it as long as Christ is the focus. As long as we remember who

Consider Christ Jesus

we're serving we'll do anything. It's when we lose sight of that that we have a problem.

What Mary did brought her closer to Christ. In all of our service, we can examine it by asking, "Are we being brought closer to Christ?" We can be very busy for the Lord, and we ought to be. We have to ask, though, "In all our busyness and service for God, are we being drawn closer?" Because, if we're not, something is wrong. If we're not being drawing closer, we're being drawing farther away. Service to God should not take us away from God, it should bring us closer to the Lord. Therefore, we have to beware of service pulling us away from Jesus Christ. How do we do that? Consider Christ Jesus. Always be mindful of Him in all of our service, whatever it is. It doesn't matter whether it be pastoring or cleaning the bathroom. Remember who you're doing it for. Remember who's work it is.

What Mary did deepened her relationship with Christ. When Christ eventually left that house, was Martha's relationship with Christ deepened? I don't think so. Was Mary's? I believe so. They both served. There wasn't anything wrong with what they chose to do, but Mary's relationship was deepened. All service to the Lord should deepen our relationship with the Lord. But the more Martha served, the more troubled she became. We need to beware of being more engaged to the service than Him. How do we prevent that? Consider Christ Jesus. Always be mindful of who you're serving.

What Mary did led to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Lord and of the truths of the Lord. She sat at Jesus feet. She heard His word. All service to God should give us a deeper understanding and greater appreciation of the Lord Himself and of the truths of the Lord. Martha lost sight of Christ, the one she was serving, or He was no longer the emphasis. She became more concerned about dishes and food and all the preparations. There is nothing wrong with the dishes, food, and

Consider Christ Jesus

preparation. There's nothing wrong with any of that. That's not the point. The point is that it became the emphasis rather than Jesus Christ. It began to pull her away and began to distract her from Jesus. It is something we struggle with all the time. In our service to the Lord we must make sure our service does not distract us from Christ. It's very possible that even in our service we become distracted from Christ. How do we prevent it? Consider Christ Jesus.

What Mary did was of spiritual benefit to her. Jesus said, she hath chosen that good part. That good portion. That which was good for her soul. What Mary did was good and beneficial and advantageous for her soul. All service to the Lord should be of spiritual benefit to us. No service to God should be a spiritual detriment. All service to God should be a spiritual benefit to us. But Martha was pulled away from that which would benefit her the most while she was serving. That's a problem. Beware of losing that which is truly beneficial to the soul while serving Him.

We need to examine our service. Is what I'm doing benefitting me spiritually? If it isn't, it does not mean that there is something wrong with the service. It simply means that you're doing it wrong. The emphasis is wrong. I've heard people get mad. They get angry. They come to Martha's defense. "Somebody had to cook that meal! How can you say she was wrong?" No one is saying she was wrong in preparing the meal. That was service; it was a good thing. That wasn't the problem. The problem was that she lost the focus on who she was serving. Somewhere along the line she failed to consider Jesus Christ.

What Mary did was a benefit to her. It can not be said that what Martha did was a spiritual benefit to her because of the way she went about it. What Mary did filled her with more reverence, adoration, worship, gratitude, and thanksgiving. What Mary did filled her with praise faith and hope. In all of our

Consider Christ Jesus

service to God, spiritual graces ought to be strengthened. If that is not happening, it's not the service that is necessarily wrong, it's the way we're doing it.

Martha became an object of pity in her service. We can hear it in Christ's words, "*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.*" About many things. Beware of becoming busy, so busy for the Lord, that you don't have time to worship. God never intended for us to serve Him, where we are so busy that we don't have time to worship Him. The way to prevent that is to Consider Christ Jesus.

What Mary did gave her peace. When we examine our service, ask our self, does my service to God give me peace? Do I find strength in my service to the Lord? Do I find comfort? Do I find spiritual direction in my service to the Lord? In all service to God, we ought to find those things. But we read, "*But Martha.*" As you read the account, Martha has no peace. I believe she did when Christ first came, and when she first started making that meal. But, somewhere along the line, the service became the emphasis and not Christ. Then, she didn't have peace. She didn't have strength. In fact she was getting more and more weary. She became more and more engaged with the dishes and food and less engaged with Jesus Christ. She lost her peace, her strength, and comfort. Beware of any service that takes away these things. Again the way to prevent it, consider Christ Jesus. Always think upon Christ.

What Mary did caused her to be happy. She was happy serving the Lord. She is sitting there, very content. She is enjoying Jesus Christ. Martha enjoyed Christ when He first got there, but somewhere along the line, as the emphasis became the serving, she is no longer enjoying what she is doing, because she has lost sight of who it is she is serving. "Martha, but Martha." The privilege was hers by Christ's coming into her house. What a privilege what an opportunity. But that very privilege and

Consider Christ Jesus

opportunity became a burden. It became a weight. I realize there's a burden in serving the Lord, but this is different. When service to the Lord becomes a burdensome weight, and it takes all the joy out of it, we're doing it wrong. We put the emphasis on the wrong thing. Consider Christ Jesus. Think upon Christ.

I don't believe Mary even noticed Martha scurrying about. Her full attention was upon Christ. Martha was cumbered about with much serving. The result of that was she became careful or worried and troubled about many things other than the Lord. What did she do? She began to watch Mary. She began to see what Mary was doing. She got caught up in thinking, "I'm doing more than my share here. This isn't fair. Lord tell her to help me." Any time we think that we are doing more than our share in the service to the Lord, you're doing it wrong. You might as well stop right where you are. You put the emphasis on the wrong thing.

Even if we did do more than our share, do you realize that's a blessing that you can do more? That's not a bad thing. You see, this is what happens when Christ is no longer the emphasis. I can just see Martha going back and forth, each time she glances over at Mary and there she still sits, and Martha is getting angrier and angrier by the moment. The joy is gone. The joy in serving the Lord is no longer. She got caught up with thinking, "Mary is not doing anything. I'm doing everything." She began to begrudge Mary and to murmur and complain. Isn't there something wrong when I or you, in our service to God, while serving the Lord, we begin to murmur and complain? Something is wrong. I don't believe what is wrong is necessarily with what we are doing, but that we have put the emphasis somewhere else. You can not make other people the emphasis. "Well I've done it eight times and as far as I know they've never done it." You have got the emphasis in the wrong place. You are not going to enjoy serving the Lord.

Consider Christ Jesus

I believe this is one of the reasons, among many, why so many of God's people seem so miserable serving the Lord. There are many reasons, but this is certainly one. I'm sure Martha started out enjoying what she was doing. "Tell her to help me. I'm doing more than my share. This isn't fair." What is she doing? She is keeping score. One of the worst things we can do in life, one of the absolute worst things you can do in your marriage, is keep score. It is one of the worst things you can do in church, in anything, because no one keeps score correctly. They keep it in their favor. Don't keep score. Just be so focused on Christ that you don't have time to keep score. Martha did all these things; the joy was gone.

It's important to realize Martha did continue serving, but she was irritated. There's a lot of irritated servants of the Lord around. Should we be irritated while serving God? She was frustrated. She continued serving, but she was getting more and more frustrated because, in her mind, Mary isn't doing a thing. She continued to serve, but her spirit and her attitude are now wrong. There was nothing wrong with her making a meal and providing the needs of the Lord Jesus Christ. There's nothing wrong with that at all. The problem now is her spirit and her attitude. The very service of God began to become bothersome to her. When our service to the Lord becomes a bother, we are doing it wrong. The Lord never meant for our service to Him to be bothersome to us.

Her fault was that she became cumbered with much service. The improper emphasis on Martha's service began to pull her away and distract her from the very One she was serving. She allowed the busyness and the details of service; and there are details, Christ is to be served correctly there are details; but she allowed the busyness and the details to overshadow Jesus Christ. How do we prevent this? Consider Christ Jesus.

The very moment our service to the Lord becomes a

Consider Christ Jesus

drudgery, the very moment we begin to murmur and complain, we need to get on our knees and refocus. We need to put the emphasis back where it belongs, upon Jesus Christ. When we do that, we say, "Thank you Lord for letting me serve. Thank you for just letting me do anything in your service." Consider Christ Jesus.

You see, Martha became stressed rather than blessed. There are a lot of stresses. You take someone who is pastoring, there are a lot of stresses. You put the emphasis upon that and it will ruin you. It will destroy you. You won't enjoy it. You won't even be serving God. When we begin to feel stressed in the service of the Lord, we need to refocus. Consider Christ Jesus.

People can be a problem in any service to God. People can get in the way. They can be a problem. That's not the emphasis thought. When there are problem people we need to consider Christ. Hebrews 12:3, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." She became stressed rather than blessed. The way to prevent that is to consider Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 3:1 is very good advice. Think upon Christ. Behold Christ. In all of our service, whatever our service intakes, whatever it is, there is going to be trials and difficulties in that service. In order to keep from putting the emphasis on that, so we do not dwell there, consider Christ. If someone does something that irritates you, focus on Christ. Turn your eyes to Christ. If somebody isn't doing what you think they should do, focus on Christ. The other will harm you. Focusing on Christ will never hurt you. Christ being the emphasis will never do you harm. It will always be of spiritual benefit.

We are privileged and blessed to be saved and to be allowed to serve God. That God would allow you or me to do anything in His service, to me is mind boggling. That He would

Consider Christ Jesus

even allow us to serve Him. None of us can serve God the way we ought to. None of us can serve God in the way He deserves. Yet, He allows us, as imperfect as we are, to serve Him. What a blessing.

When we are in trouble in our service to the Lord, we need to recognize it. I struggle with this. I've said this to pastors, many times. You can study, study, study in preparing a lesson or a message, but if that's your only reason for studying, you're not going to grow spiritually. That study can take you away from Christ. We have to focus on Christ.

The devil knows that there is so much pulling on our minds to distract us from Christ. That's why we have to pray, "Lord get my attention, my mind back where it needs to be. Lord I'm getting angry with so and so. Lord get my mind back where it needs to be get my emphasis where it needs to be."

God help us in all of our service. I believe most of us want to serve the Lord. Oh, that our service would never become a drudgery. At the end of our time we can say, "Thank you Lord for letting me serve you. Thank you for allowing me to serve you."

There is no better life than to serve the Lord. You don't have to apologize to your children, grand children, your spouse, or anybody for trying to serve God. Just serve Him and enjoy it. The way to enjoy it is, He has to be the emphasis. Consider Christ Jesus.

