



One Thing

Sermon Series Guide

ONE THING

Sermon Series

January 5 – February 2, 2025

We live in a world filled with distractions and competing priorities making it easy to lose our focus. In this Sermon Series, we will explore scripture readings that offer simple yet profound guidance through passages that emphasize “one thing.”

These scriptures point to the essentials of faith—whether it’s seeking God above all, releasing the past, or clinging to core truths. You will be encouraged as you walk alongside the congregation discovering and focusing on your own “one thing” that aligns you with God’s purpose and refines your life through singular devotion, simplicity, and purpose.

Many people choose a word to focus on for the New Year. This word is chosen based on what they want to be intentional about, or what will speak about their life and who they want to be. Take time to pause and consider what is important. What is your “one” word for the year?

January 5, 2025: One Thing I Ask

January 12, 2025: One Thing I Lack

January 19, 2025: One Thing I Need

January 26, 2025: One Thing I Know

February 2, 2025: One Thing I Do

Resources:

Got Questions

Beth L. Tanner: Commentary on Psalm 27

Working Preacher: James Luther Mays

Mark K. Marsh: Interpreting The Silence

Enter the Bible

Pastor Duke Taber: Answered Faith

January 5, 2025

One Thing I Ask

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Creator, Thank you for this time together to seek you. There are so many things that distract us from you in our day-to-day lives. As we study your word, keep us focused on you. Open our eyes and our hearts to “one thing” you know we need to see and hear today. Amen.

Focus Questions:

If you could ask for “one thing” from God that you would be guaranteed to get, what would it be?

Why?

Main Reading:

Psalm 27:1-14 was written by David as a prayer to God. He asked that God would deliver him to safety during a time when many were trying to bring him down.

Sermon Reflection:

- As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
- Are there any questions about the sermon that you hope we answer today?

Reflection on the reading from Got Questions:

David’s life seemed filled with a range of human emotions—a common shepherd boy with great confidence in God’s faithfulness who honored authorities, fled for his life, and became the king against whom all future kings of Israel would be measured. He saw many military victories. He also fell into grave sin, and his family suffered as a result. But through it all David turned to God and trusted Him. Even in the Psalms when David is downcast or despondent, we see him lift his eyes up to his Maker and give Him praise. This reliance on God and continual pursuit of a relationship with God is part of what makes David a man after God’s own Heart. God promised David a descendant to rule on the throne forever. That everlasting king is Jesus, the Messiah and Son of David.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/life-David.html> (Excerpt)

Reflection Question:

What memories do you have about David from the Bible stories you have read?

Background on the Bible Passage:

David had an intense desire to be close to God. He wrote, “One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” David’s one request is God’s presence, not only in a moment of need but as a continual dwelling place. David recounts God’s faithfulness and protection as his light and salvation. This memory anchors his trust. David emphasizes the importance of waiting on God, trusting He will respond in His time. This message challenges believers to cultivate a heart that longs for God, setting aside distractions.

Read and Reflect on Psalm 27:1-4.

David's word relays the confidence he has in the Lord. The Lord's presence is life-giving and protective. Jerome Creach in Working Preacher quotes James Luther Mays saying, "The Lord is called 'light' because light draws darkness away."

- What thoughts and emotions are brought out in the passage "My Lord is my Light and my salvation"?
- What are the qualities of God's faithfulness that David expresses?
- What does David mean by each of these qualities and how do they apply to David's situation?
- We can make a decision almost daily to live in fear or trust in God and God's promises. How do you choose trusting God over living in fear?

Read and Reflect on Psalm 27:4-6.

David expresses his intense desire to be close to God physically and spiritually. He identifies a place where God is and shares his vision of it.

- What is the "one thing" that David asks God for?
- What are David's reasons for wanting to be with the Lord?
- Why does David want to enter the Lord's tent/temple?
- How can we feel concealed under the cover of "his tent" in our church?

Read and Reflect on Psalms 27:7-10

David moves to lament and uncertainty. God seems distant, and David feels lost.

- What has changed to make David feel this way?
- What does it mean to seek God's face?
- We know the intense feeling of wanting to be close to God but having God feel distant. What can we do to make the reconnection with our Lord?

Read and Reflect on Psalm 27: 11-14

David sets aside his uncertainty to focus on praising God.

- What is David looking for from God?
- How do you see "the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living?"
- What are the differences or similarities between "seeking" and "waiting" for God?

Application Questions:

- How have Psalm 27 and the sermon challenged you to cultivate a heart that longs for God and sets aside distractions?
- What do the Psalm and the sermon tell you about God, what God is doing, and how God is working in your life?
- Has your "one thing" to ask God changed?

Prayer:

Share and pray for any concerns of the group.

Lord, I am here waiting for you. My heart and hands are open to your purposes and plans for my life. Give me the patience I so desperately need and lead me in my waiting. Though my feelings may not be there just yet, I believe You are moving on my behalf right this minute, protecting, defending, preparing, and providing. Give me the grace to keep trusting in You in the face of the gale-force winds of doubt that are blowing all around me. Anchor my heart in You. Amen.

Louie Giglio; Waiting Here for You

January 12, 2025

One Thing I Lack

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Creator, Thank you for this time together to seek you. There are so many things that distract us from you in our day-to-day lives. As we study your word, keep us focused on you. Open our eyes and our hearts to “one thing” you know we need to see and hear today. Amen.

Focus Questions:

If you could ask for “one thing” from God that you lack, what would it be?

Why?

Main Reading: Mark 10:17-31.

Mark was written by Mark to mostly Gentile Christians, likely in the church at Rome. He wanted to encourage the people to persevere through suffering and persecution. Mark believes Jesus is the servant-Messiah and Son of God who died for sinners. His emphasis is on Jesus as a teacher.

Sermon Reflection:

- As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
- Are there any questions about the sermon that you hope we answer today?

Reflection on the reading from Mark K. Marsh: Interpreting The Silence:

“Do you want to be something or do you want to do something?” That’s the question a friend of mine was asked by his spiritual director many years ago.

I wonder what that question brings up for you in your life today. How would you answer it? What matters more to you – being something or doing something? I didn’t know it at the time but I think that is exactly what was going on with me that night I sat in my law office overlooking Corpus Christi Bay. I was the newest and youngest partner in the firm. I was fast-tracking it. I had good clients and income. I was married and had a child. I owned a house, a car, a truck, a boat, and a cat. I think that question is the unspoken question at the heart of Jesus’ conversation with the man in today’s gospel (Mark 10:17-31).

Reflection Questions:

- How would you (or did you in your earlier years) answer the question in Mark K. Marsh’s story?
- What matters more to you – being something or doing something?

Background on the Bible Passage:

Jesus was teaching in the region of Judea and across the Jordan when a man ran up to him, fell on his knees, and asked him what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Mark does not give us much information about the man Jesus interacts with except that he is rich and Luke 18 refers to him as a “ruler”, which likely indicates that he is a member of an official council or court. What Jesus sees is that this rich young ruler is attached to his wealth.

Read and Reflect on Mark 10:17-20

The Good teacher and the commandments.

- Why did the rich young man ask what he must do to inherit eternal life?
- We know that he was following the commandments since he was a boy. What do you think he may have been missing in his life?
- What might the man in Mark K. Marsh’s story be missing in his life?
- Have you ever asked yourself what you need to do to inherit eternal life?

Read and Reflect on Mark 10:21-22

The rich young man is saddened by Jesus' answer. While Jesus warns of the danger of wealth and giving up your possessions, the more important part of Jesus' statement is “Follow me.”

- What was the one thing the rich young man lacked?
- Jesus invites this man to trade his earthly possessions for the treasures of heaven. What makes it hard for us to let go of our earthly possessions?
- Why is the statement “follow me” the more important part of what Jesus said?

Read and Reflect on Mark 10:23-31

Jesus acknowledges the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom. The disciples are astonished when they realize that even the wealthy struggle to enter the kingdom. Jesus declares that salvation is impossible for humans alone but possible with God.

- How does Jesus explain how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom?
- We do not enter God’s kingdom by our own efforts, our wealth or our achievements. What makes it possible to enter the kingdom?
- What might we lose by following God?
- What might we gain by following God?
- Which one carries the greatest sacrifice?

Application Questions:

- What might you lack that hinders you from fully surrendering and following Jesus?
- Has your “one thing” you lack changed?

Mark K. Marsh ends his story with this quote: "You lack one thing." It's not a criticism. It's not a judgment. It's not a deficiency. It's a door opening to new life. It's an opportunity with The God for whom nothing is impossible."

Prayer:

Share and pray for any concerns of the group.

Lord, Thank you for allowing us to be your children. We know that there are things that we lack in our lives. Guide us in our daily walk to have our eyes focused on you so that we can see and be open to the opportunities of serving and loving you. We thank you for our relationship with you that gives us hope and the promise of eternal life. Amen.

January 19, 2025

One Thing I Need

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Creator, Thank you for this time together to seek you. There are so many things that distract us from you in our day-to-day lives. As we study your word, keep us focused on you. Open our eyes and our hearts to “one thing” you know we need to see and hear today. Amen.

Focus Questions:

If you could ask for “one thing” that you need from God, what would it be?

Why?

Main Reading:

Luke 10:38-42 was written by Luke and is a companion to Acts. Luke presents the works and teachings of Jesus that are especially important for understanding the way of salvation.

Sermon Reflection:

- As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
- Are there any questions about the sermon that you hope we answer today?

Reflection on the reading from Enter the Bible:

While visiting two sisters, Jesus praises the one who listens to what he says but admonishes the worry and distraction of the other.

This story is often interpreted to strike a contrast between two types of behavior as if Jesus praises discipleship and passive learning while criticizing active service. Some have taken the passage to assert the superiority of the contemplative life over the active life. Some have taken it to assert the superiority of receiving Jesus over obligatory behavior. Such readings, however, entirely miss the point. The main focus of the story is the encounter between Jesus and Martha. Martha is described as distracted and worried. That state of mind prompts her to accuse her sister of abandoning her and leads her to try to use Jesus to satisfy her demands. Jesus does not admonish Martha for the kind of service and hospitality she offers. Indeed, elsewhere in Luke and Acts, service of the kind she is performing is strongly praised. He cites, instead, Martha’s anxiety. Her desire to serve is laudable; her worry is not, for anxiety causes service to take its focus off of the guest and become jealous. Both of the women in this scene participate in activities that are consistent with Christian discipleship. What Jesus insists is that any expressions of discipleship should focus on Jesus himself.

Reflection Question:

The story of Mary and Martha is a familiar one. What stands out to you about how Enter The Bible explains the story?

Background on the Bible Passage:

Mary and Martha lived in the village of Bethany which is about 2 miles from Jerusalem. They were the sisters of Lazarus, the disciple Jesus resurrected. They likely have a close relationship with Jesus which is why Martha opened her home to him. Jesus reveals that sitting at His feet and listening is the “one thing needed.” Mary makes that choice. Jesus notes Martha is much more distracted and filled with anxiety while Mary is at peace. Jesus points out that Mary has chosen the “better part” by choosing the relationship with Him over a sense of duty.

Read and Reflect on Luke 10:38-42.

Mary and Martha respond differently to their guests.

- How do these two sisters differ?
- Are you more like Mary or Martha?
- Is Mary’s choice better?
- What about Jesus’ call for us to be servants?
- What can we learn from Martha’s response to Jesus? How could Martha have responded differently in this situation?
- How can we be present with Jesus and still be the servant who cares for those around us?
- How do you feel about this story?

Application Questions:

- Jesus invites us to choose presence over productivity, peace over pressure, and devotion over duty. We make decisions every day about how we spend our time. How can we prioritize presence over productivity, peace over pressure, and devotion over duty in the midst of life’s demands?
- How can we respond differently in situations that seem unfair?
- Has your “one thing” changed over time?

Prayer:

Share prayer requests with the group.

Pray for the needs of the group closing with this prayer:

Lord, Thank you that you are always there to spend time with us. Sometimes it’s hard to choose to be in your presence over productivity, finding peace in you over pressure, and being devoted over duty. Open us up to see you in all situations, to keep our focus on you even when we are busy, under pressure and feeling obligated. Being in a relationship with you is one thing we truly need. Amen.

January 26, 2025

One Thing I Know

Opening Prayer:

“Heavenly Creator, Thank you for this time together to seek you. There are so many things that distract us from you in our day-to-day lives. As we study your word, keep us focused on you. Open our eyes and our hearts to “one thing” you know we need to see and hear today. Amen”

Focus Questions:

What is “one thing” you know?

Why are you confident in what you know?

Main Reading:

John 9:6-25 was written by John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” His main purpose in writing this Gospel is in John 20:31: “that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”.

Sermon Reflection:

- As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
- Are there any questions about the sermon that you hope we answer today?

Reflection on the reading from Pastor Duke Taber: Answered Faith

Updated on: October 8, 2024

In John 9, I discover a powerful story of healing and spiritual revelation. Jesus encounters a man born blind and miraculously restores his sight, leading to a profound transformation in the man's life. This chapter not only showcases Jesus' divine power but also reveals the deeper spiritual truths He came to share. As I explore the rich symbolism and teachings within this passage, I'll uncover how Jesus' interaction with the blind man challenges religious assumptions and illuminates the path to true spiritual sight. Join me as I jump into John 9 and experience the wonder of this miraculous healing. Together, we'll gain fresh insights into Jesus' identity and mission, and learn how His light can open our eyes to the truth of who He is.

In John 9, Jesus encounters a man who has been blind since birth. This miraculous healing reveals Jesus' divine power and teaches important spiritual truths. As Jesus passes by, He sees a man blind from birth. His disciples ask, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”. Jesus answers, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.” This challenges the common belief that physical afflictions are always a direct result of personal sin.

Jesus does something unexpected to heal the man. 1. He spits on the ground and makes clay with the saliva. 2. He anoints the man's eyes with the clay. 3. He tells the man, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” .The man obeys and comes back able to see. This unconventional method showcases Jesus' sovereignty and power. He can heal in any way He chooses. The healing also has symbolic

significance: clay symbolizes human frailty and dependence on God, Saliva, symbolizes Jesus' divine power and personal touch, and washing symbolizes cleansing and obedience. Through this miracle, Jesus demonstrates His authority as the Son of God and His ability to bring both physical and spiritual sight to those in need.

The healed man boldly testifies about his miraculous healing. His testimony sparks curiosity, controversy, and further investigation into the identity and power of Jesus. The man's neighbors are astonished to see him healed. They question if he's really the same man who used to sit and beg. *"Hence the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, 'Is not this he who sat and begged?'"*(John 9:8 NKJV) Some recognize him, while others think he just looks like the blind beggar. The man affirms, "I am he".(John 9:9 NKJV) They ask how his eyes were opened. He explains how "a Man called Jesus" (John 9:11 NKJV) healed him. The people bring the healed man to the Pharisees. They question him about his healing. The man recounts how Jesus put clay on his eyes, washed, and now sees.

This sparks a division: Some Pharisees say Jesus can't be from God since He healed on the Sabbath and others question how a sinner could perform such signs. They ask the man's opinion. He boldly declares, "He is a prophet". (John 9:17 NKJV) The Pharisees doubt the man was born blind, so they call his parents to testify. The Pharisees ask the man's parents if this is their son who was born blind, and how he can now see. His parents confirm: This is their son and He was born blind. But they feared the Jews, who had agreed to put anyone who confessed Jesus as Christ out of the synagogue. So about his healing, they say, "He is of age; ask him". (John 9:23 NKJV) The parents' testimony verifies the man was born blind, leaving the Pharisees to wrestle with the undeniable reality of this miraculous sign.

The Pharisees call the healed man again for questioning. They're skeptical about Jesus, whom they view as a sinner for healing on the Sabbath. The man fearlessly proclaims Jesus as a prophet. He defends Jesus, saying, "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing". (John 9:33 NKJV) The healed man's testimony is remarkable: He acknowledges Jesus as being from God, he recognizes Jesus' power to perform miracles, and he stands firm in his belief even through opposition. The man's bold witness challenges the Pharisees' assumptions. His transformation from physical and spiritual blindness to sight is undeniable.

John 9 is a powerful testament to Jesus' divine authority and the transformative power of faith. Through this miraculous healing, I've seen how Jesus challenges religious assumptions, revealing that true sight goes beyond the physical area. The blind man's journey from darkness to light symbolizes the spiritual awakening that comes from encountering Jesus.

As I reflect on this passage, I'm reminded that genuine faith often comes at a cost. The healed man faced opposition and excommunication for his unwavering belief in Jesus, yet his spiritual sight only grew stronger. May I, too, have the courage to boldly proclaim the truth about Jesus, even in the face of adversity.

This chapter invites me to examine my own spiritual vision. Will I, like the Pharisees, remain blinded by legalism and preconceptions, or will I, like the healed man, humbly recognize Jesus as Lord and worship him with a transformed heart.

Reflection Question:

What would your response be to your neighbor being healed of a disease that they have had since birth?

Background on the Bible Passage:

The blind man's life was transformed through a personal encounter with Jesus. Jesus knew when he saw the blind man that this was not the result of sin- he was born this way. This encounter became the foundation that shaped his life and his testimony.

Read and Reflect on John 9:6-12

Jesus' healing of the blind man is very detailed. He spit on the ground, made mud, and put it on the man's eyes. He then instructed him to go to "wash in the Pool of Siloam."

- What was the response of his neighbors when they saw him?
- Have you ever known anyone who was healed? What was your response?

Read and Reflect on John 13-25.

They bring the man to the Pharisees and explain that this happened on the Sabbath. The Pharisees have many questions. But the man declares, "One thing I know: I was blind but now I see." The man doesn't have all the answers but he clings to his personal experience with Jesus. He shares his story with conviction.

- What convinced some of the Pharisees to be against what Jesus did?
- The Pharisees do not think Jesus is from God because he heals on the Sabbath. Why does Jesus keep healing on the sabbath when He knows it bothers the Pharisees?
- The Pharisees continue to doubt so they ask the parents about their son. What was the parents' response? Why did they respond this way?
- When the Pharisees bring the healed man back a second time for questioning, how is his attitude about Jesus changing?
- What is his "one thing: he knows?"

Application Questions:

- The healed man is not afraid to tell his story despite the opposition he received. The change leads him to worship Jesus. How can telling our story change a person's faith?
- He is not shy about telling his story of being healed by Jesus. What is your moment of faith, your story, that you have shared with others?
- Has your "one thing" to ask God changed?

Prayer:

Share prayer requests with the group.

Pray for the needs of the group closing with this prayer:

Lord, Thank you for the courage to be bold even if it is in small ways. Sometimes we can be blind to seeing and hearing you. Help us open ourselves up to encounters with you that change everything. When we are faced with challenges, allow the simple truths to sustain us through our doubt. You are our source of assurance always. Amen.

February 2, 2025

One Thing I Do

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Creator, Thank you for this time together to seek you. There are so many things that distract us from you in our day-to-day lives. As we study your word, keep us focused on you. Open our eyes and our hearts to “one thing” you know we need to see and hear today. Amen.

Focus Questions:

What is one thing you do because of your call to faith?

Why?

Main Reading: Philippians 3:5-14 was written by Paul while he was imprisoned because of his stand on the gospel. Paul wrote letters to the Philippians to encourage them to stand firm when they were being persecuted and rejoice despite the circumstances they were in.

Sermon Reflection:

- As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
- Are there any questions about the sermon that you hope we answer today?

Reflection on the reading from Enter the Bible:

Paul ranks everything in his life, both successes and failures, as inferior to “the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (3:8).

In this text, Paul is concerned with the foundational issue of where people put their confidence or faith; on what values do they base their lives?

Paul first instructs the Philippians to beware of those who place their confidence “in the flesh,” that is, in physical pedigrees and practices divorced from spiritual matters. Paul views human life in holistic (not dualistic) terms, integrating physical, psychological, and spiritual elements. As in other letters (especially Galatians), Paul is particularly concerned that some teachers overemphasize the importance of circumcision, to the point of trying to impose this Jewish ritual on Gentile believers. Though he affirms this ancient practice *for Jews* as a sign of God’s covenant with Abraham’s descendants (see Genesis 17)—noting that he himself had been “circumcised on the eighth day” (3:5)—he strongly resists making this practice a requirement for Gentiles’ salvation. He even resorts to crude, sarcastic denunciation of those who insist on circumcising Gentiles, calling them wild “dogs who mutilate the flesh!” (3:2).

But Paul also engages in self-criticism. He knows well what it means “to be confident in the flesh” from his own experiences not only of circumcision but also membership in “the people of Israel,” righteous obedience to the law as a Pharisee, and zealous opposition to “the church” of Jesus Christ (3:4–6)—all good things done in good faith, except for persecuting the church. But good or bad, all these things Paul now considers “loss,” “rubbish” even, compared to “the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (3:7–8). All claims to self-righteousness crumble in the face of the higher righteousness “that

comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God based on faith” (3:9). Such righteousness generates from the faith/faithfulness of Christ in his life, death, and resurrection.

Even after believing in Christ and faithfully preaching the gospel of Christ, Paul makes no pretense of perfection. He confesses that he still has a long way to go to fulfill Christ’s purpose for his life. Imagining himself running a long-distance race, Paul strains to set aside his checkered past and “press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (3:12–14). He also urges the Philippian believers to have this same mindset as they run their own life race, persistently moving forward, and making progress, even as we “hold fast to what we have attained” (3:16).

Reflection Question:

What stands out to you about Paul's faith?

Background on the Bible Passage:

Paul knows firsthand that there is opposition to the gospel. He understands these false teachers because he was one of them. Paul challenges the people of Philippi to let go of past accomplishments and failures that hinder their pursuit of Christ. Instead he makes a declaration to “press on” emphasizing a focused commitment to pursue Christ wholeheartedly.

Read and Reflect on Philippians 3:4-11.

Paul focuses on flesh and law.

- What does “confidence in the flesh” mean?
- What reasons did Paul give for his confidence?
- While Paul had many accomplishments, he now considers what he had confidence in as a loss. In verse 8 he says “I have lost all things.” What is he referring to and how does he feel about it?
- What does Paul see as success?
- Is there anything in your past that you have been confident in that is holding you back?
- How can you continually get to know Christ better and prioritize your relationship with Christ?

Read and Reflect on Philippians 3:12-14.

Paul acknowledges his need to hold on to what he has in Christ. His ultimate goal is an intimate relationship with Christ.

- Where does Paul see himself in his spiritual life?
- What is the “one thing” he is going to do?
- Paul emphasizes pressing on and straining toward the prize. What is the prize that he wants to win?
- The pursuit of knowing Jesus deeply is Paul’s primary focus. How does Paul encourage you in his desire to win the prize?

Application Questions:

- What practical steps can you take to leave behind past failures and distractions to run the race of faith with endurance toward personal growth in Christ?
- Has your “one thing” to do changed?

Prayer:

Share prayer requests with the group.

Pray for the needs of the group closing with this prayer:

Lord, Thank you for the example of Paul. Sometimes we get lost in our earthly confidences, our past failures, and our distractions. Give us strength to press on to the ultimate prize that you have given us through your death and resurrection. Open our eyes to see the vision of what lies ahead: the call of God in Christ. Amen.