



Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 29, 2021

*Call to Worship

*One thing we ask of the Lord,
this is what we seek:
**to dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of our lives;
to behold his beauty and ponder his ways
in the company of his people.**
Let us enter God's presence together,
offering our worship and praise,
singing and shouting with joy.
**Hear our cry, O God,
and respond with your grace.***

*Hymn of Praise

"Be Thou My Vision"

UMH 451

*Opening Prayer

*Lord, we are pulled in so many directions in our world today. We are bombarded with all kinds of distractions. We confess that it is hard to keep our focus. We sometimes feel like pinballs in an arcade game. Hear our prayer today for help. In our worship today, meet us here, capture our minds and hearts. Stir within us an intensifying desire to do life with You. **Amen.***

Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

Sing the Doxology Together

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer for A Heart Focused on One Thing

~ written by Bill & Kristi Gaultiere

One Thing (based on Psalm 27)

*One thing I ask
One thing I seek
Just one thing*

*To dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life
To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple
To be kept safe in Christ, hidden in him in the day of trouble
My heart says, "Seek Christ's face!" Your face, Lord, is all I seek
My heart cries out, "Lord, please don't hide your face from me!"
My heart longs for Jesus Christ alone, no matter what happens*

*One thing...Jesus
When darkness descends
One Light...Jesus
When enemies attack
One Savior...Jesus
When I am left alone
One Friend...Jesus
One thing...Jesus
I take heart
One thing...Jesus
I yearn
One thing...Jesus
I wait
One thing...Jesus*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

God's Word

Psalm 27:2-6

The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!

Message

"One Thing"

Pastor Clark

*Hymn of Faith

"Breathe On Me, Breath of God"

UMH 420

Blessing

As you leave this time of worship, may God lavish love on you so that it fills your lives and overflows to everyone around you. May you be infused with strength and purity, and filled with confidence in the presence of God our Father when Jesus returns again. Go in peace and joy!



Be Thou My Vision

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my Wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, and I thy true son,
Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.
3. High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.
2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.
3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.
4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

One Thing

Psalm 27:2-6 (NLT)

When evil people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. ³ Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident. ⁴ The one thing I ask of the LORD— the thing I seek most—is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD’s perfections and meditating in his Temple. ⁵ For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. ⁶ Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the LORD with music.

Introduction

What’s your one thing? What is the one thing that you look to for satisfaction, contentment, and peace?

Here’s what you say to yourself when something is your one thing: *“Life has meaning and I have worth only if I have _____ in my life!”*

List of virtually endless possible “one things”...a doctoral student at Westminster Theological Seminary by the name of Hannibal Silver created this catalogue of “one things.”

Power	Inclusion	Culture
Approval	Achievement	A Person
Comfort	Prosperity	Family
Image	Work	Helping
Control	Religion	Suffering

Which of these have tended to hook you? How has that shaped what you do and say?

The Competition of Many Things

There is a **one-thing war** being fought on the turf of your heart! There are many things that compete with the Lord as the one thing that your heart craves. The truth be told—the spiritual reality for many of us is that the one thing is not the Lord. And the danger in that reality is this: your one thing will control your heart, and whatever controls your heart will exercise inescapable influence over your words, choices, and actions.

If the Lord isn’t your one thing, the thing that is your one thing will be your functional lord. That functional lord tends to crowd out the real Lord.

As I have said before, we live in an age of distractions. The enemy of our souls knows if he can keep us flooded with a deluge of distractions, it will be all the harder to focus on the “one thing” that keeps our souls healthy. Yes, we all struggle with living with distracted hearts.

As I have viewed each of season one of *The Chosen*, I have observed and come to stand amazed at Jesus' capacity to live with a heart on target. Despite a seemingly infinite number of interruptions and distractions, Jesus' life never got off track. Despite all the flack that He had to deal with, Jesus kept his focus. He found a way to live out His Kingdom purpose in every apparent distraction. He transformed every one of them into an opportunity for good and grace. Oh, how I wish I was better at that!

Why was Jesus' heart on target? ***He had settled his "One Thing" to come to do the will of His Father.***

Researchers have now identified some of the common mental processes that mark out elite athletes. And one of the most intriguing aspects appears to be a phenomenon known as the "quiet eye." It is a ***kind of enhanced visual perception and focus*** that allows the athlete to eliminate any distractions as they plan their next move.

Intriguingly, "quiet eye" appears to be particularly important at ***times of stress***, preventing the athlete from "choking" at moments of high pressure. It may even lead to the mysterious "flow state." The same ***laser-sharp focus*** can help doctors maintain their focus as they perform surgery, and it is of increasing interest to the military.

Kinesiologist Dr. Joan Vickers began to suspect the secret of extraordinary performance lay in the way that elite athletes see the world. She hooked a group of professional golfers up to a device that precisely monitored their eye movements as they putted. She found an intriguing correlation: the better the player, the longer and steadier their gaze on the ball just before, and then during, their strike. Novices, by contrast, tended to shift their focus between different areas of the scene for shorter periods of time.

The general idea that you should "keep your eye on the ball" is well-known, of course. But this suggested something more intricate, with the precise duration of the gaze correlating with an objective measure of sporting success.

It is important for believers to have a "quiet eye" in the face of the stresses of life. This "quiet eye" ***enables us to fix our gaze upon Jesus and shed the many distractions*** that emerge in life and especially during high stress seasons of life.

David's One Thing...

"...is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple."

That's amazing. You'd think in light of the circumstances David finds himself with a mighty army surrounding him, under attack from the enemy, that David's "one thing" would be safety or security. Or vengeance or retribution or settling the score or victory. But that's not what stirred David's heart!

David's single-minded quest, David's one thing...***living life in the Presence of the Lord.*** What that does not mean is that David wanted to retreat in isolation, hiding away from life's stresses and strains. David wasn't evading life; David was discovering a new way to do life in the midst of the stresses.

David was Tabernacle/Temple focused. It wasn't that the earthly structure so fascinated David; he wrote this when the tabernacle tent served as a rather humble **temple** for Israel, before the wonderful building that Solomon built. *"It was not the earthly temple itself that charmed David but rather the beauty of the Lord that was to be found at the temple in a special way."*

It reminds me of the opening verses of Psalm 84:

"How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young— a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you."

You can feel the pulsating desire in the heart of this Psalmist. He was on a **journey of desire**. The pilgrim begins by saying to God, *"How lovely is your dwelling place..."* God's dwelling place was the temple in Jerusalem. The psalmist's longing, his desire is to be there. Look at the words he uses: **"My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out."** Those are strong words! If you've ever been really homesick you might begin to understand what he's feeling. He's consumed with this desire. He's even jealous of the little swallows that fly around the temple grounds, building their nests and hatching their young near the altar of sacrifice. He longs to be as close to God as they are, in that place of intimacy and safety. Finally, he gives the first of three blessings in this psalm: **"Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are forever praising you."**

How would you measure your heart's desire for the Lord? Do you ever have moments when your heart yearns for God's Presence? Yes, we all experience the ebbs and flows of this desire. Don't beat yourself up when it seems at low tide. Simply wake up the next day with a fresh desire to experience more of the Lord's Presence.

Profoundly Simple Way to Cultivate a Deeper Sense of God's Presence

This is recognizing the value of brief sentence prayers...whispering prayers we might call them...every moment has the potential of communion with God.

- ❖ Pray when you **wake** in the morning
- ❖ Pray when you feel **wonder**, lift praise to God
- ❖ Pray when you **wait** in line
- ❖ Pray when you **walk** more than a few steps
- ❖ Pray when you **worry** turning them into prayers
- ❖ Pray when you are **weary**
- ❖ Pray when you feel **wounded**
- ❖ Pray when you are disappointed with your **weaknesses**
- ❖ Pray when you are **wavering** against temptation
- ❖ Pray when you are **wrestling** with key decisions
- ❖ Pray when you have a **witnessing** opportunity

- ❖ Pray when your day *wanes*

Envision all these and many more life situations as **invitations to pray!** They serve as on-ramps into experiencing God's Presence during our days. Try it for a week and see what happens. It will help you feel more of the "one thing" communion with God in the midst of the pressures of life!

Grace to Will One Will

I have said many times that our Christian walk is not a self-help project. God is our partner in this grand endeavor. God imparts grace to assist us in the journey. Perhaps John Wesley, of all the great saints in Christ, grasped this best. Wesley understood that God delights in infusing our faith with layers of grace.

- ❖ There's **prevenient grace**...the grace that goes before, the grace that readies our hearts to receive more of God, the grace that prepares the way for the Lord to enter our hearts
- ❖ There's **converting grace**...the grace we need at that moment when we have the opportunity to say yes to Christ and receive Him as our Lord and Savior
- ❖ There's **sanctifying grace**...a largely unused word today, but one of priceless power for us. God supplies the grace that cleanses and empowers us to will one will with God
- ❖ There's all kinds of **"means of grace"**...these are channels of grace that open the way for God's grace to flow into our lives

In his book, ***Faith That Endures***, Ronald Boyd-MacMillan tells the story of a number of conversations he has had with **Wang Mingdao**, one of China's most famous church pastors of the last century. The first time he met this famous—and persecuted—Chinese pastor, they had the following interchange:

"Young man, how do you walk with God?" I listed off a set of disciplines such as Bible study and prayer, to which he mischievously retorted, "Wrong answer. To walk with God, you must go at walking pace."

The words of Wang Mingdao touched Ronald to the core. How can I talk about the Christian life as walking with God **when I so often live it at a sprint?** Of course, we "run with perseverance the race marked out for us," **but we may fail to run with "our eyes [fixed] on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith" (Heb 12:1-2).** Jesus is inviting me to walk with him. Too often, I find myself running for him. There's a difference! When we walk with Jesus, we open ourselves to receive all the grace God wants to impart to our needy souls!

Conclusion

An Example in Real Life...the Story of Prayer Behind Jackie Robinson's Baseball Debut

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became pro baseball's first black player when he debuted with the Brooklyn Dodgers. But there's an amazing story of faith and courage behind Robinson's entry into baseball. **Branch Rickey** was the Dodger's baseball executive who eventually signed Jackie Robinson. Rickey's pastor was **Wendell Fifield**, from the Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn. (This

church, at one time pastored by Henry Ward Beecher, had a history of working with the "underground railroad" to help free slaves.)

While Rickey was trying to decide if he should sign Jackie Robinson, he paid a visit to Rev. Fifield. He barged into the pastor's study and told Fifield, *"Don't let me interrupt. I just want to be here to pray. Do you mind?"*

According to an eyewitness report written by Fifield's wife June, the two men passed the time without words. The pastor continued his work and Rickey energetically paced the floor as if wrestling with a weighty decision, stopping occasionally to look at the pastor's window. For forty-five minutes he continued pacing, pausing, pacing, and then pausing...praying. Finally, Rickey broke the silence by pounding his fist on the pastor's desk as he shouted, *"I've got it!"*

"Got what, Branch?" the minister asked. June Fifield said that Rickey finally relaxed on a chair and told his pastor, *"This was so complex, fraught with so many pitfalls but filled with so much good, if it was right, that I just had to work it out in this room with you. I had to talk to God about it and be sure what he wanted me to do. I hope you don't mind."*

"Wendell," he said, *"I've decided to sign Jackie Robinson."* Then Rickey straightened his bow tie, donned his hat, and left the room as he said, *"Bless you, Wendell."*

In a couple of interviews from 2011, people who knew Rickey reflected on this story. Rickey's grandson said that when a well-known journalist told Rickey that "all hell would break loose" when Jackson took the field, Rickey quietly countered, ***"I believe all heaven will rejoice."*** Also, Jackie Robinson's widow Rachel had this to say about Rickey's need to pray about the decision: *"He knew he was going to be pretty well isolated in making it, so he needed all the strength he could summon up, to be able to take the step."*

Branch Rickey, a man of faith, knew he needed to be in God's presence to make such a monumental decision with a lot of expected fallout. But, because he had previously chosen his "one thing," he was free to make that courageous choice.

What might be possible in your life—that may seem impossible now—if you were to make the Lord your "one thing?"



- *Debbie Fields dealing with heart arrhythmia issues*
- *Gene Fields, Matt's father, hernia surgery options*
- *Heather Martin, recovering at home; facing gall bladder surgery*
- *Elizabeth Jones, making remarkable recovery in a Rehab Hospital*
- *Jan Smith from Faith Church continuing treatments*
- *Christina Cuddihy, as she continues her treatments*
- *Sarah Cory and Guy Cory as they contend with all they are facing*
- *Brady Martin, 10-year old struggling with leukemia*
- *Gary Stammler, amazing recovery from pancreatic cancer treatments*
- *Eileen Moffo, mother of Carla Jay, as they found a mass on her liver*
- *Community Focus: Schools and Staff as new school year looms with risks*
- *National Focus: Flooding from Tropical Storms and Hurricanes*
- *World Focus: 1) Earthquake in Haiti; open pathways for humanitarian aid, 2) Friend of Casey Adams, Khalid Afzal and family were able to safely leave Afghanistan!*

Tools for Schools: We are ending our collection for Tools for Schools. Bring your donations soon. The Tools for Schools (TFS) program provides students with school supplies and backpacks throughout the school year.

Grandparent's Day

Grandparent's Day is Sunday, September 12th. We are asking folks to submit pictures of your family (it would be great if you're in the picture too!) and grandchildren. We will prepare a slide presentation for that Sunday. If at all possible, please share the pictures **digitally**.

Attention Choir members and Future Choir Members: The Hope/Faith Choir will begin practicing on Wednesday September 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM at the Hope Church. We will sing for the Sunday worship service on September 19, 2021. We are looking forward to a great "choir" year of sharing our voices during our worship services. Any questions, please contact Dwight or Theresa Snowden.

Outdoor Worship and Picnic: on Sunday September 19 we will have a special outdoor worship experience and a church-wide picnic! Put this on your calendar now as we will have all kinds of special features that morning!

Pray for Haiti and Share Your Compassion: Our hearts are once again touched with compassion for this beleaguered nation hit with another massive earthquake taking the lives of over 1400 and injuring thousands more. Scores left homeless. Desire to make a donation? Make to either Faith or Hope UMC and memo Haiti Offering and we will make sure it goes through UMCOR so you can be certain 100% of your donations go to meet the need at hand.

Hopeful Hearts: Hope's baby clothing ministry has shifted to winter clothes but finds itself extremely low on clothing due to the pandemic dynamics. We urgently need donations—even new clothes—for this vital ministry. Boys and girls clothing birth to five years old. You can bring it to church on a Sunday or drop off at Hope.

New Adult Sunday School Class starting October 3, led by Matt Fields and Tom Helber each Sunday from 9:00-9:45 AM. Watch for more details.

A Look Ahead

The following is a sketch of some of the highlights in the coming months. More details for each event will follow.

September 6 ***Labor Day Bologna Give Away at Faith***

September 12 ***Grandparent's Sunday***

September 19 ***Outdoor Worship and Church Wide Picnic*** at Home of Paul Owens

September 19 Start of ***Season Two of The Chosen*** at Faith Church

October 1-2 ***Trash and Treasure Sale*** at Hope Church

Trash and Treasure will be on October 1st & 2nd. The tables are now set up and Jan Baughman will be here Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 – 1:00 and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 – 4:00 for drop offs. Please do not leave items outside. If you need to drop off items at other times, or no one is at the church when you come, please call Jan at 614-837-3673 or 614-266-4845. You can also call Linda Fields at 614 570-3937. Both of us live close and can come let you in. For those of you who have keys to the church, please place your items in an obvious place. Jan will also need plenty of help sorting and pricing items. Please give her help whenever you have time. Please hold off large items until the Thursday before the sale. The leftover items will be picked up by the Kidney Foundation on the Monday following the sale. Linda Fields is in charge of the kitchen this year and is asking for donations for desserts. We would like to have lot of pies, a few cakes, and other desserts, but our pies have been a staple at the sale and are expected by our customers. We will also need plenty of help the week prior to the sale as we will be making our soups and sandwich makings.

October 16 ***Chili-Cook Off and Game Night*** at Faith Church

