

## 6 Pentecost C

Genesis 18:1-10a

Psalm 15

Colossians 1:23-28

Luke 10:38-42

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Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Life is complicated. And those three words are an oversimplification. We hear all the time of the need to find balance, to take rest, to take care of ourselves and yet, there is much work that needs doing.

It's easy to join in what seems to be criticism of Martha from today's gospel reading. Martha, busy in the kitchen, providing good hospitality, abandoned by Mary. I've often spoke of the strong mandate to hospitality God gave the Jewish people. Which tells us then, that Martha hasn't done anything wrong, she is in fact an example of what we often name as discipleship.

Mary on the other hand is doing something new and radical. Women were not equals in this time – and so for a woman to ignore the household duties, to sit at the feet of a teacher, was unheard of. These are things that describe a man's behavior. And that's why this story would have really caught the attention of 1<sup>st</sup> Century readers - for its drastic inclusion of a woman described not doing what was expected.

It's a story then that was meant to turn heads, to call for change; it actually announces a new day in Jesus.

There are pivotal moments in life. All over the news yesterday we heard about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. I was six years old and really don't remember it much, but I've grown up hearing the stories of "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." I watched later Apollo missions travel to the moon and back. It wasn't so miraculous to me, because it was just part of my world, part of my growing up. Later in life however, I recognize how this event changed the world a lot. Or perhaps, it changed us a lot. It changed what we thought were our limitations, what we thought we were capable of and how we view the planet. It helped us to look beyond ourselves and into the cosmos – further

into Creation than we ever could before. It made us realize that we are a very small part of something we can't even measure the expanse of.

We've seen other events too that have marked a point in history where we have collectively as a nation (or even nations) turned our faces and efforts in the same direction. World War I and II are easy to name, the coming down of the Berlin Wall, Martin Luther King Jr and his work for liberation, the advent of modern technology and of course many, many others.

These changes are not easy and often come with great strife and difficulty as we are challenged to move our minds and hearts into new ways of not only thinking, but of living together in relationship with God and the world.

Not every change happens in such news-worthy ways however. These larger events don't happen without a string of smaller ones preceding it. Imagine it this way, if you have a massive ocean liner cruising the seas, we all know that you are never going to turn that vessel on a dime. But, in fact one small nudge is all it would take for it to end up in an entirely different place than it intended.

If a small story of a woman daring to break the bonds of stereotypical behavior was radical, it was even more daring for Luke to write it down. It was another step for the disciples to include women in ministry. All the way to today, and we can see the long term shift that has occurred that has not only lifted up and included women, but has been an ethic leading us to work for the same for all people regardless of gender, age, ability or any other label. It's like the farmer or gardener who plants the seed and waits in patience for the results.

We cannot see the end point of the ministry we do together. But, we can be faithful in the moment, sitting at the feet of Christ. We come on Sunday morning to do that – to listen and learn and share. And we may never imagine that such a simple thing could one day change the world, but I tell you it does. So many of the small decisions we make on a daily basis actually lead us to end up in a very different place years later. And it also has great impact on those around us too. Are they harsh or loving words with those we love? Do we work at our jobs or school with integrity or resentment? Do we even simply smile at someone on the street who is

different than us or move away? Do we carefully consider the environment or let someone else do it?

Abraham and Sarah's story is a fine example this morning. One small visit from three travelers changed everything. Well into old age, childless, they had given up hope of ever having a family, but they never gave up hope in God. They could have never known that their faithfulness through all those years would end up blessing them with children one day, but it also led to them being the roots of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, which of course includes millions of believers to this day. A few loaves of bread, a hastily prepared meal, a place to rest, some polite conversation and humanity was charted on a new course.

It's next to impossible to know what those small moments or decisions might be when they happen. But God knows. God is continually shaping and guiding us as has been done since we were formed of the clay of the earth. Continue to eat the bread and drink the wine of Christ – because it is changing us. Keep listening to the Word in scripture, in prayer – because it is changing the world. Continue to welcome the stranger, feed the poor, love in all circumstances – because it changes them. Keep doing the small things that move us in new directions even when we don't think they do. In faith, we keep putting our trust in God, who sees beyond the horizon we can imagine. Amen.