

BIBLE STUDY
July 11, 2022

THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Genesis 18: 1-10a

Luke 10: 38-42

Colossians 1: 24-28

1. Genesis 18: 1-10a

- God has been promising Abraham that he would have a son and become the father of a great nation, but Sarah and he keep growing older and have no child. Abraham continues to hope and to believe in God's promise. He becomes our father in faith and the model of faithfulness.
- Abraham is visited by three guests. Hospitality was a serious obligation in Abraham's world. Abraham does not hesitate to provide welcome and a feast for his unknown guests. It will be revealed that the guests are the Lord. One is the Lord, and the others are angels. Some see an image of the Trinity in the three visitors. In Hebrews 13: 1, the author refers to this story encouraging all to practice hospitality "for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels."
- This story is a beautiful reminder to us to practice hospitality to God by welcoming him into our lives whenever and however he chooses to enter. Abraham is an example of welcoming God in the way that he prostrates before them and prepares a feast.
- The Lord promises that Sarah will be with child in a year's time. Sarah laughs at the suggestion because she and Abraham are so old. The Lord chides her for laughing and says, "is there anything too marvelous for the Lord to do?"
- There is a humorous exchange in which Sarah denies that she laughed, and the angel insists that she did. Sarah became afraid because she laughed.
- The name Isaac means "to laugh."

2. Luke 10: 38-42

- In Luke and John's Gospels, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are portrayed as close friends of Jesus. Jesus often visited their home. Martha welcomes Jesus and provides hospitality to him. Overwhelmed by all the details of serving, Martha complains to Jesus that her sister has left all the work of hospitality to her. She tells Jesus to tell her sister Mary to help her.
- Luke often sets up a triangle in his stories in which one criticizes the other. Jesus usually takes the side of the accused and reprimands the accuser. Martha accuses Mary and Jesus defends Mary and reprimands Martha.
- Martha has served the Lord but in the way that she wants to—by preparing many dishes. Jesus tells her that only one dish is necessary. She did not have to go to such great lengths of hospitality. He says that Mary has chosen the better part. Mary has taken her place at the feet of

Jesus in a traditional posture of discipleship—the disciple giving full attention to the teacher. Jesus suggests that this is the kind of hospitality that he wants—complete attention to his word.

- The story teaches a lesson to us that we need to serve the Lord on his terms and not on our own terms. Constant busy-ness and action may make us feel good and productive but is it truly what the Lord wants? We need balance in our lives. We need both action and prayer. We need both work and rest. We are challenged to reflect that we sometimes serve the Lord on our own terms—what makes us feel good—rather than what the Lord is asking of us.
- There is another interpretation about the role of women as disciples. In Luke's Gospel women play a significant role and the Lord is genuinely concerned about them. Martha is fulfilling a traditional role of women's discipleship—in the kitchen. Mary has chosen a role that was usually reserved for men—disciples sitting at the feet of the teacher. Jesus says that he will not take away from Mary what she has chosen for it is the better part. He is welcoming Mary into full discipleship regardless of traditional gender roles.
- How do we balance action and prayer in our lives? How do we balance work and rest? What is God asking of us?

3. Colossians 1: 24-28

- Paul sees his apostolic ministry as replicating the ministry of Christ for Christ said that his disciples would undergo persecution and suffering as he did and that they would continue his work by preaching the word, healing the sick and proclaiming the nearness of the Kingdom of God.
- So, Paul rejoices in his sufferings for the sake of the Gospel. He knows that God will transform the sufferings into glory as he did for Christ.
- Paul says that he is filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. This does not mean that there are deficits in Christ's suffering. He may be referring to the all the tribulations that will happen before the return of Christ. That Paul is contributing to what must happen until the Lord returns.
- God has given Paul the task of preaching the Word as his stewardship—his share in God's work.
- Paul's preaching is revealing God's mystery—God's plan—for how he was to open salvation to both Jews and Gentiles.
- This plan of God is Christ in us. We are united to Christ as we hope for his glory which is to come.
- Paul's mission is to preach Christ and to make believers perfected (made whole) in Christ. Paul does this by proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching. For this reason, Paul bears the sufferings of his mission through the power of God in him.