

## Ordinary 16C - 2022

The story of Mary and Martha needs to be held in close contact with the story of the Good Samaritan because they are about the Great Commandment's two parts- love the Lord your God and love your neighbor. If all we had was the Good Samaritan story, we might conclude that all we have to deal with is the second part of the great commandment, because that's all that's dealt with there. That all we need to do is to go out and take care of everybody.

We live in a world where the general feeling seems to be that simply doing good is enough with no sense of a basic understanding of our nature.

Now remember that this whole thing started with the great commandment, the first part of which was, "Love the Lord your God with all you mind, heart, and soul." And that wasn't dealt with at all in this story parable. Going beyond the usual boundaries that we set up requires a basic re-interpretation of our outlook and artificial boundaries of who we will help."

From the NIB Commentary: "Neither the story of the good Samaritan nor the story of M and M is complete without the other. Each makes its own point--The Samaritan loves his neighbor, and Mary loves her Lord--but the model for the disciple is found in the juxtaposition of the two. To the lawyer, Jesus says, "God and do," but he praises Mary for sitting and listening. The life a disciple requires both.

The power of these two stories consists not just in that they exemplify the great commands of 10:27 but in Jesus' choice of characters to illustrate the love of neighbor and the love of God: a Samaritan and a woman. The social codes and boundaries were clear and inflexible, a Samaritan would not be considered a model of neighborliness, and a woman would not sit with mean around the feet of a teacher. In its own way, the conjunction of the stories about the Good Samaritan and the female disciple voice Jesus' protest against the rules and boundaries set by the culture in which he lived.

As they develop seeing and hearing as metaphors for the activity of the kingdom, the two stories also expose the injustice of social barriers that categorize, restrict, and oppress various groups in any society. To love God

with all one's heart and one's neighbor as oneself meant then and now that one must often reject society's rules in favor of the codes of the kingdom--a society without distinctions and boundaries between its members.

The rules of that society are just two---to love God and one's neighbor... but these rules are so radically different from those of the society in which we live that living them invariably calls us to disregard all else, break the rules, and follow Jesus' example."

### **The Highest Priority**

Have you ever been in a hurry and buttoned up a long overcoat with lots of buttons and when you were done, found out that the coat was uneven? What went wrong? I'll tell you what went wrong. When you don't get the first button in the right hole, all the rest are out of sequence too, right?! That's a parable about life. Jesus said it this way in the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." (Matthew 6:33) If the Lord is not the high priority in your life, then, like the overcoat, so many other things in life will be out of whack as well. (by Arthur E. Dean Windhorn)

### **Leave the Trouble in God's Hands**

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.

George Muller Massena, one of Napoleon's generals, suddenly appeared with 18,000 soldiers before an Austrian town which had no means of defending itself. The town council met, certain that capitulation was the only answer.

The old dean of the church reminded the council that it was Easter, and begged them to hold services as usual and to leave the trouble in God's hands. They followed his advice. The dean went to the church and rang the bells to announce the service.

The French soldiers heard the church bells ring and concluded that the Austrian army had come to rescue the town. They broke camp, and before the bells had ceased ringing, vanished. (Source Unknown)