Today is a fresh look at some very well-known stories:

Scripture reading

Key question is inherit eternal life

But the key answer is how we live

Key point is “‘“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, “Love your neighbour as yourself.”’

Love God – Love neighbour

We can be hard on the teacher of the Law for wanting to justify himself but we face the same problem – There is so much need – how can I possibly love everyone?

Do you think that the Levite and the Priest in Jesus parable thought they did anything wrong?

They were being obedient to there understanding of the demands of the religious laws. They looked and stayed away. That was the cultural norm.

How many people pick up a hitchhiker?

What about Martha? Martha is doing what she thinks is the right thing. In fact it is very hard to fault her. She is being hospitable and generous. She is serving.

In both cases the priestly class had a role and a reputation to uphold. Martha had responsibilities. There were cultural norms; clear gender roles.

Martha is put out because she is not getting help but also because this is what Mary should be doing. Mary should be helping in the kitchen not sitting in the lounge room with the men.

Jesus is treating Mary as an equal, as somebody valuable, as he would a beloved man in his inner circle.

In Jesus story he places the Samaritan as the hero….a hated and despised Samaritan. This was not only unexpected it would have been horrifying according to all the cultural norms.

Now Jesus is quite happy to break cultural norms and have Mary do the same. He is happy to have her sit at his feet while he sits and teaches (a normal position for a Rabbi to teach from).

I suspect that Martha falls into a trap that many server orientated people can fall into when they are not feeling appreciated. This is the time that servers can just fly into a great huff and walk out, sometimes to never be seen again. Or object loudly. Or make pronouncements that seem to come from nowhere.

Jesus response can seem like it is the complete opposite of what he has just told the teacher of the law. Serve others don’t serve others.

But remember there are to key commands – Love God and Love others.

This is a bit like this version of the disciples cross where we focus on practicing the presence of God and the presence of people.

Talk to these two concepts….

Abide and Fruitful

A pendulum abiding and being fruitful

Spending time with God and time with people sometimes time with God corporately

Daily divert

Weekly withdraw and

Annually abandon

Jesus answer to the teacher of the Law was in part to say “ The way we love people is the way we love God.” You can’t say I love God but not people. I love God but not the church. I love God but not the sinner or the vulnerable or the needy etc.

But the truth is that the best action comes out of contemplation.

We in our church have some decisions to make. We could just act according to our best knowledge. But instead, we will go through a process of discernment. We will ask where are you leading us God? We have to believe that that will lead us to a much better outcome. One that will bring greater fruit.

In fact Jesus in John 15 says that without him we can achieve nothing.

So how do we sit at the feet of Jesus? How do we abide with Jesus?

Practices of disengagement from people. Practice the presence of God….

Sabbath – Stop, Rest, Delight, Worship

Silence

Contemplation

Solitude

Scripture

Listening

Journaling

Practices of engaging with people…Practicing the presence of people….

Bless others

Be curious and actively interested

Serve one another

Be hospitable and generous

Share hope in Jesus

Shaping our lives – Rule of life, a life giving set of practices attached to a schedule.

Bless

Eat

Listen

Learn

Sabbath

Sent

Reflect