Meditations July 10-July 17, 2022
Gen. 18: 1-10a; Luke 10: 38-42

"There is need of only one thing, and Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:42, NRSV)

A NOD TO WOMEN

Women have had a special place in Jesus' earthly ministry. There was the woman who poured a whole bottle of expensive perfume at his feet. Then there was a woman taken in adultery whom Jesus spared from abject humiliation. At the resurrection morning, it was the women, instead of the disciples, who first found out that the Lord had risen.

In Jesus' time, women suffered under misogynistic policies, much more than they still do today, including in so called developed nations. Marth's complaint to Jesus about her sister was couched in hospitality or housekeeping terms. She said, "Do you not care that I am left to do all the work by myself?" The implication is that Mary, her sister, was supposed to be with Martha doing hospitality work. She was not supposed to be, as a woman, at the feet of a teacher, even if that teacher was the Lord Jesus himself. It's just not done that women sit at the feet of a teacher. Teachers were always male. To sit at the feet of a teacher belonged to men. The response of Jesus was a very significant affirmation of women. In essence Jesus said that the privilege of receiving the good news belonged to Mary as it did to anyone else, and that that blessing she received from the Lord will not be taken away from her.

It is no accident that the improved opportunity for women to be accorded equity has taken place under the tutelage of the Christian faith. While problems remain, as evidenced by what is happening today in America and in other places with regard to the issues posed by pro-life, or pro-choice, nevertheless women can possibly look to the future with hope toward parity with their male counterparts. All because
Jesus Christ came that we "might have life, and have it more abundantly."

Jesus broke down barriers that held people back from achieving their full humanity. And he challenged existing stereotypes that robbed persons or entire people of their worth before God. His parable of the Good Samaritan destroyed the common perception that there were no good Samaritans. His affirmation of women as in his support of Martha's sister, Mary, was a bold strike against women as second rate before God; and a shout out for women as equally worthy, along with men, to receive the good news of the love of God in Jesus Christ – of his earthly ministry, death and resurrection, and of the Spirit's presence with us in the world. AMEN.

Joy and peace,

Pastor Ben
(Rev. Dr. Ben Vinluan)