

What St. Paul says in his letter to the Colossians was a surprise to most people – that Christ is available and a gift to all people. Some people believed that God was "just for them," and therefore not for others. Others were more snobbish, and believed in their own special capacity; it simply was not possible for most people to begin to understand the mystery of God, so again, God was just for a select few.

To this common ways of thinking St. Paul says that Christ, the Word of God, is given to all. The mystery is revealed by God to everyone; no one is excluded. The love of Christ is given to all, because Christ is in you." The transforming healing power of the Spirit is available to all. As the Word of God tells us, "**God's sun shines on those who are good and those who are evil; and the rain falls on the just and the unjust.**" "God is good, all the time; all the time, God is good." Therefore, holiness is possible for all of us, and not just a select few. All of us can and are expected to live in a right relationship with God because we are filled with Christ. We all have been given the gift of God's wisdom – as we heard from Deuteronomy last week, "God's Word is not too mysterious or remote." It is not hidden or inaccessible or impossible, so don't say "Who can help us find it?" or "Who will get it for us?" It is already in your mind and heart.

You just need to act on it. Ah, there's the rub. We get distracted, we get busy about a lot of things. We act on a lot of things, but not all of them are choices impelled by God's Word. That's the dilemma in the Gospel episode – Jesus doesn't say that Martha is doing anything wrong; she's just missing out on something better while she's busy with other things.

Without going into lots of detail, let me say that there are lots of cultural undertones to that Gospel passage about gender roles, and that don't necessarily apply to our 21st century American culture. But we can take the thrust of the episode, in which again Jesus turns things backwards and upside own. He surprised them again.

If you're inclined to be a do-er, to work hard, to keep busy, to achieve – then you may need to slow down, be more present to the moment, be more spontaneous, and attentive to the movement of the Spirit in your daily activities. What is God saying and doing right now? A little less "planning a prize-winning garden" and a little more "stopping to smell the roses."

On the other hand, if you're more inclined to take life as it comes, if you're generally spontaneous, reactive to opportunities when they present themselves – you may need to be more purposeful, more methodical about your spiritual life, more reflective and intentional about where you want to go and how you intend to get there. There won't be any flowers to smell and food to eat if you don't take time to till the soil and plant the seeds.

Jesus is telling us to choose one and neglect the other. To the people of his culture he challenged them with a surprise that you don't have to do only what the culture expects. Your life will be enriched by doing things a little differently. You don't have to wait for someone else to tell you how to do it; God's Word is already implanted in your mind and heart. You only have to carry it out.