

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

July 17, 2022

Old Testament Reading; Genesis 18: 1-10

Responsive Reading; Psalm 15

Epistle Reading; Colossians 1: 15-28

Gospel Reading; Luke 10: 38-42

Sermon Title: **Him We Preach, Choose the Good Part**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary; Make hay while the sun shines, but not instead of hearing the Word.

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

When I was growing up on the farm the words of advice that I heard were, “Make hay while the sun shines.” My dad believed this but he had an added stipulation. Dad said, “Make hay while the sun shines, but not on Sunday.”

In wet weather if it was dry on Sunday you would see farmer after farmer out baling hay like crazy, but my dad was not one of them. The best hay, was hay that was baled as soon as it was dry enough to bail without risking burning the barn down by spontaneous combustion. If the hay got wet you either chopped it and put in the silo to ferment into haylage or raked it over and over again to dry it enough to bale. This would leave the baled hay dusty and lacking in nutrients needed for good milk production. Dad believed that if he honored the sabbath and kept it holy by not baling hay on Sunday God would make sure that our cows got enough good hay to produce the milk we needed to make a living. God always came through.

Our scriptures today emphasize how great God is and how His greatness will interact with us so that seemingly impossible things just might happen in our lives.

In our Old Testament lesson today, God tells Abraham that his 80-year-old wife will conceive and bear a child in the next year. A couple verses after where we stopped reading Sarah laughed at the prophecy.

As a young preacher I used to be very critical of Sarah for laughing at something that God had said. As I matured, I realized that when we hear something that goes against what we had thought for our entire lives, a spontaneous response of disbelief is a very natural thing.

The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh...is anything too hard for the Lord?” In Psalm 15 the answer to the question, “Who may abide in your tabernacle?” seems an impossible feat. In reality it would be impossible until Jesus Christ changed the playing field.

In our Epistle lesson Paul tries to explain how Jesus relates to God, to creation and to us. Paul tells the people that the description that had been passed down for hundreds of years about God was woefully inadequate. “The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man PERFECT in Christ.”

Get that? PERFECT in Christ. There is no way we can be perfect except that the perfect Christ traded His perfection for our sins so that because of Him, and only because of Him we may be perfect upon reaching the throne of our almighty God.

We cannot be perfect by making hay while the sun shines or by burning our candle at both ends to provide for our families until we first sit at the feet of Jesus and learn the true way this universe works and what our true relationship is meant to be with God the Father, God the Son and with God the Holy Spirit.

I believe that being perfect in God's eyes is not doing everything perfectly but, by understanding how awesome our God is and understanding that He wants us to TRY to do His will in His name.

If we will sit at the feet of Jesus and learn to know Jesus, not just about Jesus, and then turn that knowledge into our every action in life, as well as we children of God can do, we will be better people and this will be a better world.

If we will commit to attempting to live the life that Jesus has laid out for us Jesus will say of us, "You have chosen the good part which will not be taken away from you."

Therefore, choose the good part. Choose Jesus. Choose eternal life. Choose to sit at the feet of Jesus in life and you will sit at the feet of Jesus in eternal life.

Choose life eternal. Hallelujah and amen!